

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KERYGMATIC FAITH
FOR THE PROGRAM OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by

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DISSERTATION

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KERYGMATIC FAITH FOR THE PROGRAM OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The controversy between content-centered and pupil-centered education has quieted among most Christian educators today. However, the relationship between the two is still unclear. This study is an attempt to evaluate the importance of the Christian heritage for Christian education and to determine its place in the educational process.

R. C. Miller has stated that the center of the educational process is neither theology or the individual learner, but the two-fold relationship between God and the learner. He states that the clue for Christian education is the rediscovery of a relevant theology which will bridge the gap between content and method. Theologically, Paul Tillich seeks to unite these two with his method of correlation, the relatedness of kerygma and situation. Educationally, Lewis Sherrill seeks to correlate content and method with an analysis of the God-empowered indwelt community.

This study investigates the kerygmatic element in Christian faith and interprets its significance for Christian education. First, it investigates and defines the nature of kerygmatic faith by an investigation into the documents of the early church. Next, it surveys the kerygmatic element in the history of the church. Finally, after reviewing the existential anxieties of man and relating them to the kerygmatic element, it attempts to give some directions for Christian education in the light of this investigation.

Our findings indicate the crucial importance of the kerygmatic element in Christian education. To the degree that our conclusion is correct, the kerygmatic element of faith provides the basic determinant for the program of Christian education. Christian education can utilize many different methods, and it is related in part to other religious and non-religious educational programs, but the one essential and distinctive factor in Christian education is the kerygmatic element.

Our findings may be summarized in four points. First, Christian education must begin with situational needs of people, but these needs must be considered as the inner central needs described by the term existential anxiety, the normal longings of the heart for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. Second, Christian education has the task of relating the kerygma to these needs, for in the event of Jesus, who in his life, death, and resurrection is declared to be Christ and Lord, is the eternally valid answer for existential anxiety. Kerygma cannot be confined to a static conception of a past event, however, but is only kerygma in the light of a present relatedness within a loving community identified with the transcendent reality of Christ. Third, a kerygmatic community is a grouping of people who have found their anxieties confronted, and to a degree partially resolved, within this fellowship, and who witness to the significance of the kerygma as the source of the new relatedness. It is the human grouping which conveys meaning, purpose, and fulfillment to the individuals that come within it, and the group is the reality which the learner observes and experiences, but it is the testimony of this group that it is the transcendent relatedness to God in Christ that empowers the community to function so as to undergird individuals with courage to face potentialities of existence in the face of existential anxiety. Finally, Christian education is the purposeful guidance of the kerygmatic community as it seeks to relate the two poles, existential anxiety and kerygma, so that the individual may affirm as an experiential fact a relatedness of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

For some years Christian education in the conservative Protestant churches has received directives from two fronts, theology and general education. Theologians have said that the norm for Christian education must be the content of the Christian faith as found in its heritage, gospel, creeds, and scriptural accounts of God's action in history, particularly as seen in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. General educators, on the other hand, have often said that the norm of Christian education must be the experiences of the learner in social interaction. Often Christian education has had to choose one of these two directives to the exclusion of the other, or else have a dichotomy in theory and practice which leaves the program devoid of power.

The Problem

Brief history of the problem.--The religious educator is constantly searching for better ways of accomplishing his task. For some time the trend was for religious educators to look within the Christian faith and community itself for direction in the program of

Christian education. This latter trend would not deny the valuable contributions that other disciplines can make to Christian education, nor turn its back upon previous contributions from those fields. But it does maintain that latent within an understanding of the Christian faith itself lies the major hope for the program of Christian education.

This latest trend has been a long time in the making. Religious education, as we now think of it, may be considered to have begun with Horace Bushnell. Challenging the revivalistic concept of conversion, Bushnell maintained "that the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise,"¹ The major determinants of such growth are the life and attitudes of the parents exerted because of the organic unity of the family, which bathes the child in its own feelings and attitudes, exerting an intimate power unconsciously, undersignedly, and without any purposed control.² Bushnell insisted that the historic position of the Christian church was for the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit through the normal daily experiences of life.

¹Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1876), p. 10.

²Ibid., pp. 26, 51, 93.

The question which Bushnell faced was this: "How does God work through Christ in the educational process for the salvation of mankind?" Religious educators have been seeking a satisfactory explanation ever since.

In answering this question, G. A. Coe was one of the chief exponents of those who sought the answer by looking toward other disciplines for help. Trying to incorporate the insights of secular education, and John Dewey in particular, Coe maintained that the essential factors in religious education of any person were the person's experiences in social interaction.

Instead of attempting to transfer to the child mind certain truths that we hope will enter into his experience in a vital manner at some indefinite future time, we help him to define, understand, and improve something that he is already doing and enjoying.³

Religious education was to be organized around social experience.

Coe was severely criticized for following the creative process so far that subject matter, biblical content, and theology seemed to be ignored. The comment of E. G. Homrighausen is typical of such criticism: Religious education is now a "part of general education

³George Albert Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 82.

with no particular truth of its own."⁴

Harrison S. Elliott is one of the ablest and latest exponents of the group that seeks its primary cues for religious education from the area of general education. Defending experience-centered religious education against what he calls neo-orthodox interpretations, he says:

Religious education therefore is not an education with a fixed and predetermined content. There is no one true interpretation of the Christian religion which it is its function to transmit. Rather, religious education is an enterprise in which historical experiences and conceptions are utilized in a process by which individuals and groups come to experiences and convictions which are meaningful for them today.⁵

Objecting to those who would use the insights of modern religious educators as techniques and methods for conveying fixed content and time honored doctrines, he puts the case clearly:

It is thus evident that for those with an educational approach, an experience-centered religious education is far more than an improved methodology for making a certain religious interpretation understood so that it may be appropriated by individuals or groups. It represents their convictions as to the process through which the Christian religion has developed and through which Christian experience

⁴E. G. Homrighausen, "The Real Problem of Religious Education," Religious Education, XXXIV, No. 1, (January-March 1939).

⁵H. S. Elliott, Can Religious Education Be Christian (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 310.

has been realized. "Learning in and through experience" is not a pedagogical slogan, invented by progressive educators. It is rather a statement of the way mankind has found out everything which is known and has made whatever progress has been attained. All knowledge has grown out of man's experience with nature and human beings.⁶

Religion is no exception to this dependence upon learning through experience. Everything that man knows about God has grown out of his experience in the world and out of his reflections upon the manifestations of God in nature and in human life. God did not become known by some single and complete revelation.⁷

Elliott claims that

The present issues do not concern the importance of the Christian heritage in religious education which is Christian. They concern rather how that heritage is to be used.⁸

However, the present study makes the point that the "importance of the Christian heritage" is precisely the issue. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who the Christian Faith declares is Christ and Lord, are the "saving acts" of God, are fixed, predetermined, and the very ground of the ongoing experience process with which Christian education is concerned. Elliott has stated his attitude toward the place of the Christian heritage when he says that

subject matter in such an experience-centered process is recognized as the record and interpretation

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 311.

⁸Ibid., p. 309.

of significant experience in the area under consideration or as data pertinent to understanding or solving the immediate problem, to be understood and used in its bearing upon the situation of the individual or the group.⁹

He is consistent therefore when he says that "religious education therefore is not an education with a fixed and predetermined content."¹⁰

The present study takes the position that such a view of religious education which calls itself Christian is little more than an extension of general education, with no particular truth of its own. Christian education then becomes estranged from Christocentric theology, because it has substituted a theological position about Christ in which Christ has no essential position. Such a concept of religious education cannot be used in the church without rewriting the church's concept of itself and its task. The Christian heritage, as to its importance and its use, is exactly the issue for those who feel that the norm of Christian education, as well as in the Christian faith and life generally, must be found in the heritage centering in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who is Christ the Lord.

It is not necessary to attack the so-called

⁹Ibid., p. 316.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 310.

pupil-centered, or life-centered, or experience-centered teaching in order to support the view that the historical events of scripture are central and normative for Christian education. R. C. Miller is one who is critical of the way the Christian heritage has been used by religious educators, yet he feels that the "life centered, or experience-centered teaching is sound psychologically, pedagogically, and philosophically. It is the natural and quickest way to learn,"¹¹ He wishes to preserve the sound achievements of educators in the past and present, but also wishes to ground education in a theology which is biblical.

Theology in the background; faith and grace in the foreground might well be the slogan for this new point of view. The center of the educational process is neither theology nor the individual learner. The purpose of Christian education is to place God at the center and to bring the individual into the right relationship with God and his fellows with the perspective of the fundamental Christian truths about all of life.¹²

The center of the curriculum is a twofold relationship between God and the learner. The curriculum is both God-centered and experience-centered. Theology must be prior to the curriculum! Theology is "truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man."¹³

The new task is to make theology relevant, realizing that the goal of Christian education is Christian truth, that truth may be acquired only through

¹¹Randolph Crump Miller, The Clue to Christian Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. viii.

¹²Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹³Ibid., p. 5.

the interpretation of experience, and that we become Christians only as we use truth to place ourselves in commitment to the living God revealed to us in Jesus Christ and through the fellowship of the church.¹⁴

Miller states his answer for an adequate Christian education program most succinctly in the following sentence:

The clue to Christian education is the rediscovery of a relevant theology which will bridge the gap between content and method, providing the background and perspective of Christian truth by which the best methods and content will be used as tools to bring the learners into the right relationship with the living God who is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, using the guidance of parents and the fellowship of life in the church as the environment in which Christian nurture will take place.¹⁵

The clue which Miller refers to, a relevant theology which unites method and content, is what Paul Tillich speaks about in his concept of the method of correlation. On the one hand, kerygmatic theology emphasizes the unchangeable truth of the message, kerygma, over against the changing demands of the situation. Every theology or interpretation of the situation is subjected to the criterion of the Christian message so that the relativities of the human situation do not obscure the eternal truths.¹⁶ On the other hand, the

¹⁴Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁶Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 5.

human situation cannot be neglected, because only courageous participation in the situation can keep the freedom implied in the genuine kerygma from becoming an orthodox fixation.

Tillich seeks to unite message and situation by use of the method of correlation. He tries to correlate the questions implied in the situation with the answers implied in the message. The answers, he maintains, are not derived from the questions, nor the answers left unrelated to the questions. "It correlates questions and answers, situation and message, human existence and divine manifestation."¹⁷ That the Christian message is itself the answer to the questions implied in every human existence is a Christian theological assertion. If it is true, the present writer feels that it is the clue for a relevant theology for which Miller seeks. This theology formulates the questions implied in human existence together with the answers implied in divine self-manifestation.

This is a circle which drives man to a point where question and answer are not separated. This point, however, is not a moment in time. It belongs to man's essential being, to the unity of finitude with the infinity in which he was created and from which he is separated.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 61.

The answer implied in the event of revelation are meaningful only in so far as they are in correlation with questions concerning the whole of our existence, with existential questions. Only those who have experienced the shock of transitoriness, the anxiety of their finitude, the threat of nonbeing, can understand what the notion of God means. Only those who have experienced the tragic ambiguities of our historical existence can understand what the symbol of the Kingdom of God means.¹⁹

Lewis J. Sherrill is one of the latest proponents of a relationship theology as background for Christian education. Secular society and education may teach us much, he feels, but Christian education must draw its inspiration from the peculiar genius of Christian community and life. The unique nature of Christian education derives entirely from the unique nature of the Christian faith.²⁰

This is so for Sherrill because the Christian community is the scene of the redemptive ministry of the human self. Here is where God confronts man in redemptive self-disclosure.²¹ The human self, living in anxiety and under threat for its very existence, is confronted in the Christian community by revelation, which is the confrontation of God in His movement

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 61-62.

²⁰Lewis J. Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. xi.

²¹Ibid., p. 90.

toward the human self with a redemptive purpose.²²

Sherrill accepts completely the findings of general education and the other disciplines, namely, that becoming is by virtue of relationships.

The self is formed in relationship with others. If it becomes de-formed, it becomes so in relationship with others. If it becomes re-formed or transformed, that too will be in its relationships.²³

Thus, revelation, since it is redemptive in nature, occurs only where fellowship exists. The human predicament is one of conflict, self-doubt, and guilt-ridden estrangement. Until one is accepted in relationship with another, just as he is, he cannot begin to accept himself. The relevance of revelation lies in the fact that divine disclosure fits the human need, and can call forth the capacities of the self.²⁴ Christian education then is not God-centered or man-centered, but is bi-polar; it is concerned with the meeting between God and man, and the tension of this encounter. This meeting between God and man, and the tension of this meeting, is the scene where fellowship exists, and it is the inherent nature of the church to be the scene of this redemptive fellowship. The task of Christian education, then, is to guide the church so as to facilitate

²²Ibid., chap. 4.

²³Ibid., p. 45.

²⁴Ibid., chap. 5.

the dynamics which move the self to respond to God with the 'yes' of faith.²⁵ Christian education takes place only where God encounters man, which is through community, for there the process of interaction between persons sets up the dynamics of relationship either constructively or destructively.

Although there are many who contest this trend in the conservative Protestant churches towards a practice of Christian education grounded in a more biblical theology, it is the position of this study that the insights of general education and the various disciplines must be utilized together with the distinctive insights derived from within the Christian faith and community. It is Christian faith and community which must give the peculiar directives for the program of education called Christian.

Statement of the problem.—The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of the kerygmatic element in the Christian faith and to interpret its significance for the task of Christian education. Specifically, it seeks to do three things: First, it investigates and defines the nature of kerygmatic faith by an investigation of the documents of the early church.

²⁵Ibid., p. 163.

Second, it investigates the kerygmatic element of Christian faith in the history of Christian education. Finally, it attempts to show the vital relationship between the Christian heritage and man's existential situation, and to point out some directions which a program of Christian education ought to take so as to guide people toward an experiential appreciation and vital affirmation of the kerygmatic faith.

The study assumes that one of the major issues in religious education is the place of the Christian heritage in an educational program called Christian. In attempting to develop a program of Christian education it has constantly been necessary to ask the question "What is the heart and center of the faith called Christian?" Some types of religious education are simply incompatible with a biblical understanding of faith, the church, and its work. That is, the type of instruction given presupposes a certain concept of faith and the church. Therefore, the church must insist that only that kind of instruction be given which has possibility of leading toward realization of that kind of faith and church visualized in its own self-concept. The Christian faith as held by a church itself must determine the goal of its teaching in the light of its own self-understanding. Then, and only

then, may the insights of other disciplines be utilized in making such goals attainable.

In this study an attempt has been made to discover and restate the nature of Christian faith and the nature of man's problems in such an inclusive way that the relationship between the two may suggest educational procedures which may be utilized in guiding people toward a more rewarding faith.

Definitions of Terms Used in This Paper

Kerygma.--The usual definition of kerygma is used in this study. Kerygma is the content of early Christian preaching, the message of the preacher. This content is historically defined as an event, the action of God in the person Jesus, who in his life, death, and resurrection is declared to be Christ and Lord. This content may or may not be what Jesus considered central, or what some consider central today, but it is what the early church considered central and all-determinative for its own existence, as evidenced in scripture.

Kerygma has the additional quality of being the passionate proclamation by a witness that this content has had ultimate significance for himself. This quality is not incidental to kerygma. It is possible to say that wherever preaching is spoken of in the New Testament

it always carries with it the implication of "good tidings" proclaimed. Passionate involvement with the historically defined content is part of kerygma.

Existential.--Existential refers to existence or being in its wholeness. Reality is existential, and therefore it can only be approached by man by involvement of the whole individual as a feeling, willing, thinking, and acting organism. That which is described as existential always connotes the incongruity of actuality and potentiality, the estrangement between what is and what could be, and the awareness of infinity despite finitude. Therefore, existential moment is involvement in that moment of existence, neither past nor future but not unrelated to both, in which all of existence is in the balance. Existential situation is that situation in which all of life in its fullness confronts one. Every moment and situation is existential, but usually the term is reserved in this study for the moment or situation which puts one face to face with the ultimate questions of life.

Existential anxiety.--Existential anxiety is the normal anxiety inherent in being human. It is inherent in a growing person facing each his own life and life in society. It is concomitant with love, freedom and courage. It is both inevitable and desirable. It is

inevitable because man is finite and yet able to transcend his finitude in his hopes, always becoming and yet never so completely as he desires, free and yet bound with inadequacy. It is desirable because it is a pre-condition of growth even though it has the capacity to retard growth, and it is an aspect of being truly human even though it constantly prompts one to deny this humanity.

In this dissertation existential anxiety does not connote neurotic or abnormal anxiety even though it can become that, nor does it convey any sense of negative value judgement. Rather, it is descriptive of that kind of existence which is aware of both one's potential and his actual, what he could be and what he is, and therefore is necessary pre-condition for further growth.

Nor is existential anxiety here something to be solved, avoided, or overcome; rather, it is to be fulfilled in such a way as to realize greater meaning and purpose in life and therefore to open greater existential anxiety as potentiality grows. The anxiety of existence is that to which kerygma speaks meaningfully. As kerygma answers existential anxiety, kerygmatic faith is affirmed.

Experiential.--As used here the term "experiential" refers to that which has happened to a person, the establishing of the validity of a truth by personal empirical data. Whether the truth can be logically explained or understood does not determine its validity; only if the truth has motivational value for a person and claims the allegiance of the whole person can a truth be said to be established experientially. Therefore, for a truth to be experientially conceived it must of necessity mean passionate involvement.

Truths that are affirmed on the basis of experiential verification are always relational truths. Such truth always has a significance for one's whole being, and has relational bearing toward one's own self, his immediate local situation, toward the cosmos, and God. The goal of the educational task is never assent to true ideas however lofty they may be. Rather, the goal is the affirmation based on experiential verification of a relational situation which conveys meaning and purpose and in which one already to a degree participates.

Kerygmatic faith.--Kerygmatic faith is more than a static concept of the past event, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Kerygmatic faith is the

attestation of an experiential relationship with the living Christ, the Lord of all life, encountered within a kerygmatic community, the church. It is not a fully thought out rationalization of the faith. Rather, it is a declaration that whereas estrangement from God and enslavement in human inability to help oneself has been ones condition, one now has to a degree experienced the liberating power of the living, present, reigning Lord of life who has overcome the estrangements and enslavements of life and death through the power of God in Christ.

Kerygmatic faith is a dynamic involvement in the community of the Spirit under the lordship of Christ. Kerygmatic faith is being in the state of being grasped within a situation in a community which is interpreted as resulting from God's loving and redeeming work. Kerygmatic faith therefore makes a two-sided affirmation. First, it affirms that God in the kerygma answers existential anxiety. Second, it affirms that a human community answers existential anxiety. Both say the same thing, that a human fellowship speaks to one's existential situation and that this relationship is the empowering of God who transcends that relationship and who has called it into being. Kerygmatic faith declares

that the past event of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus confirms him as Christ forever and has significance for one's present and future existence through having incorporated one in a living fellowship empowered by God.



CHAPTER II

A STUDY OF THE KERYGMATIC ELEMENT IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Introduction

The present chapter attempts to discover and restate the nature of Christian faith by investigating the records of the early church. It does this in order to define the task of Christian education. Programs of Christian education must be sound not only educationally and psychologically, but also biblically and theologically. Programs must be grounded in biblical theology. Likewise, the church must continually evaluate itself from the biblical theological point of view. If both of these are done, instruction will not be at variance with the church which it seeks to serve.

The church, however, is determined by its message. Historically, a group of people did not decide after some preliminary discussion to organize a church; rather, they discovered that they already existed as a church because something had happened to bring them together into a common fellowship. They did not decide on a message to proclaim; rather, they already had a message, for the message itself was the cause of their being together. They never had to decide on the content of

their teaching, for "they could not but speak of what they had seen and heard."¹ Later, church organization had to be developed, content had to be standardized and interpreted, and writings were utilized in the development of methodology for teaching others. But organization, content, and methods were all determined by the given message, the historical events, which were experientially affirmed by the early Christians.

Christian education is education by the church. The church continually seeks to better understand its faith and to fulfill the potential power of its faith. In this task it utilizes the insights of modern disciplines to help in its self-understanding and to help individual learners experientially appreciate and grow in faith.

Our first task is therefore historical. What was the basis of the dynamic faith responsible for Christendom? What was the message, or kerygma, of the early Christians? What did they believe? What was their self-understanding, as individuals and as a church? To these questions we turn our attention in this chapter in order to understand what the church thinks of itself so as to be prepared for its task of helping persons for meaningful participation in it.

¹Acts 4:20.

The Kerygma of the Early Church

The kerygma is the content of early preaching evidenced in the New Testament.--In this section our purpose is to determine the essential content of the early Christian faith as seen in early Christian preaching as it appears in the New Testament. This content, called kerygma, is the message which the preacher proclaims to his listeners. Our attempt here is not to describe the kerygma of Jesus, for his preaching or teaching is preserved for us only within the framework of the writings and life of the early church. Whether it has been preserved for us correctly and according to Jesus' own point of view is not within the scope of the present study. Other disciplines must answer that question. John Knox² and Rudolf Bultmann³ both discuss this question thoroughly. The present task is to discover the kerygma as it was proclaimed in the early church and came to be recorded in the New Testament.

The problem of using "The Gospels" as sources for discovering the kerygma.---The Gospels were not written to present the kerygma to unbelievers. They

²John Knox, The Early Church and the Coming Great Church (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1955), chap. 2.

³Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 1, 1-2.

were written for the edification of those already partly committed to Christ and in need of further instruction,

The Gospels presuppose the kerygma and on the basis of it expand on the details for the readers' further enlightenment as Luke 1:4 so specifically points out. However, the Gospels themselves leave us in some doubt as to the exact nature of the kerygma, even though they contain it and presuppose it on every page. Because the Gospels were written at relatively late dates and do not intend to make the initial presentation of the kerygma, it is difficult to prove from them alone the exact nature of the kerygma of the early church. A study of the Gospels only leaves doubt about the nature of the kerygma: Is it Jesus' teachings, His passion, His person, or something else?

However, when we turn to the rest of the New Testament the situation is different. The Acts of the Apostles throughout refers to preaching by significant persons in the early church. We shall see, however, that we must be prepared to interpret the Act critically. The epistles of Paul also must be interpreted critically, but, because they are the earliest writings available in the New Testament and openly evidence what the kerygma was, at least for Paul, we shall begin our

study with his epistles.

The kerygma in Paul's writings.--All of Paul's epistles are addressed to people who have already heard the gospel, and, therefore, assume that they know already what the kerygma is. But as Paul deals with the theological and ethical problems of the churches, he constantly reminds them of what the gospel is in which they believe, and on the basis of that gospel draws implications for their benefit.

First Corinthians particularly is addressed to people concerned with holding to the kerygma and seeing its practical implications for Christian living. Therefore, he must remind them that "it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe."⁴ What is the content of that preaching? He quickly reminds them of what it was: "we preach Christ crucified."⁵ A little later he reminds them that the only foundation for Christians is that which he has already laid for them, which is Jesus Christ.⁶ Whatever he or anyone else builds in expanding upon this faith, it can only be on this basic foundation and no other.

In the same epistle Paul reminds them more

⁴I Cor. 1:21.

⁵I Cor. 1:23.

⁶I Cor. 3:11.

specifically of what they had "received," which was the gospel which he had "delivered" to them.

Now, I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel. . . . For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received.⁷

The content of what he received was

that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.⁸

Then Paul adds:

Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time . . . then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.⁹

Bultmann does not accept this passage as kerygma.¹⁰ However, he does this because he feels that the list of eye-witnesses is being invoked to prove the resurrection, as though the article of faith about the resurrection could establish another article of faith about the redemptive efficacy of the cross. He is right in contending that you cannot establish one article of faith by invoking another. But to conclude that this passage is not kerygma on this basis is

⁷I Cor. 15:1,3.

⁸I Cor. 15:3-5.

⁹I Cor. 15:6-8.

¹⁰R. Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, ed. H. W. Bartsch (London: SPCK, 1953), pp. 39, 112.

insufficient. No article of faith can stand separate from any other. It does not matter here whether Paul is arguing to establish his own apostolic claims, the resurrection, the efficacy of the cross, or the implications he later points out about the spiritual body. Our point here is that Paul could "appeal" to a common body of belief which he had "received," which he had "preached" to them, and which was so much a part of their faith that other considerations began with it. "Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed."¹¹ H. C. Dodd¹² thinks that this section in I Corinthians 15 is a formula "received" by Paul and other Christians in their introduction to Christianity, just as Paul here states. Martin Dibelius¹³ says that Paul learned and repeated this formula "word by word." In Romans, Paul writes to a church which he has never visited, but which has received the kerygma and is noted for its loyalty and faith. It is Paul's purpose in the future to visit this church, and he writes this epistle to introduce himself and "his gospel." In order to gain

¹¹I Cor. 15:11.

¹²C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 13.

¹³Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 16.

an ear for his thoughts he appeals to that which they already believe. In this way he seeks to accredit himself to them as an apostle who advocates right doctrine. Therefore, only after affirming what they have in common does he present his own ideas. Reasoning in this manner, he compliments them upon their faith,¹⁴ thus hoping to win their acceptance and an ear for his thoughts.

In his introduction he appeals to a common formula or expression of faith. He does not have to argue for this section, for it is not "my gospel," but the data of the Roman's faith, and the faith of the whole early Christian church.^{15, 16}

The gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh, and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.¹⁷

Because the terminology of this section is not characteristic of Paul's other writings, and the reference to Davidic descent is not part of Paul's usual argument, it appears that he is drawing from a common expression of faith a primitive formula basic to the kerygma.

¹⁴Rom. 1:8.

¹⁵Dodd, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁶Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 49.

¹⁷Rom. 1:1-4.

In Romans 8¹⁸ Paul makes an appeal to the faith which they already have. When Paul asks, "will he not give us all things with him?," he bases his answer on their belief¹⁹ that "He who did not spare his Son but gave him up for us all."²⁰ Later, he again appeals to what they already believe: " . . . it is God who justifies. Is it Christ Jesus who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?"²¹ The sequence that Christ died, was raised and is at the right hand of God interceding for us appears to be characteristic of early preaching and basic to the kerygma.

Paul says the "word of faith which we preach" is near you when "you confess with your lips that Jesus is the Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead," and this is your salvation.²² Paul says that the reason Christ died and lives again is "that he might be Lord both of the dead and the

¹⁸Rom. 8:31-34.

¹⁹That this is their "belief" is not to be disputed. It is a "fact" in a most objective and historical sense. It is impossible, however, to prove that "what" they believed is objectively and historically true. Christians ought not, and cannot, argue that it can be objectively and historically proven as true. However, that they "believed" this to be true ought to be, and is, objectively and historically established.

²⁰Rom. 8:32.

²¹Rom. 8:33-34.

²²Rom. 10:8-10.

living."²³ Another function of Christ is immediately y added when he says, "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God."²⁴ This is related to what he has said earlier: " . . . on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."²⁵

The evidence, which has been all too hurriedly presented here, shows that Paul's preaching contains these fundamental ideas: Christ is crucified, who died for our sins, was a descendent of David, buried, was raised, all according to the scriptures, who now is Lord, at the right hand of God, interceding for us as Judge and Savior. It will be our purpose in the section "Confessions of Faith" to show that all of this is summed up in the confession "Jesus Christ our Lord."²⁶ To be Lord meant that he brought the present evil age to a close when he gave himself for us,²⁷ and by virtue of his death and resurrection brought the glorious age to come. The significance of "according to the scriptures" is precisely that all the elements included in what the prophets foretold about the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament are seen in this kerygma about Jesus

²³ Rom. 14:9.

²⁴ Rom. 14:10.

²⁵ Rom. 2:15.

²⁶ Rom. 1:4.

²⁷ Gal. 1:4.

Christ. The age to come has dawned, for to be Lord means to be the Lord of the new age by virtue of his death and resurrection, which are the fulfillment of prophecy.

The agreement between Paul and early Christianity.--Was the kerygma which Paul preached consistent with that of the rest of the early church? Although Paul is distinctive in his understanding of the gospel, and had real difficulty contesting the faith with others, Paul's kerygma was basically in agreement with the earliest church. However, the significance of that kerygma was quite different for him than for many others, and this was the reason for his constant struggle with other early Christians. The differences in implications which he drew from the kerygma accounts for his continual appeal to the common kerygma believed by all.

Paul himself claims that "the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."²⁸ This revelation came as insight as he struggled with his own experiences and those of the Christians. But this does

²⁸Gal. 1:11.

not mean that the basic kerygma of his faith was peculiar to him and was not shared by others.

Paul himself tells us of visiting Cephas after three years²⁹ at which time he stayed two weeks with him and undoubtedly discussed the faith, which was the real reason for his being there. Further, after fourteen years Paul "laid before them [Peter, James, and John] the gospel which I preach among the gentiles."³⁰ with the result that "those who were of repute added nothing to me"; but "gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship." Further, in I Corinthians 15, Paul claims to have "received" the tradition reported there, and then adds that "whether then it was I or they [he has previously mentioned the apostles], so we preach and so you believed." Not only Paul, but others also, he claims, preach that he "received" and "delivered" to them. Further, although the whole letter to the Romans is addressed to a congregation which he had not previously visited or written to, he still can appeal to a data of faith from which he can argue to make his own point. Therefore, our conclusion is that if Paul had any argument with other Christians, it was not essentially over the content of their

²⁹Gal. 1:18.

³⁰Gal. 2:1-10.

preaching, the kerygma, but over the implications derived from it.

If our conclusion is correct, then it is also true that the kerygma must have been common very early in the church, at the latest a few years after the resurrection. The tradition which Paul received must have been received no later than on his first visit to Jerusalem,³¹ which could not be later than seven or eight years after the resurrection. It is more likely that he received it in connection with his conversion, which probably occurred only from two to four years after the resurrection. Paul, however, must have known something of the kerygma prior to his conversion and had the basis for it, so that we can be sure that the kerygma did not originate with him. We can safely assume that the kerygma, as seen in Paul's writings, is close to the source of its formation³² both in time and content.³³

The kerygma in Acts.—The kerygma is easier to uncover in the Acts of the Apostles than in the writing of Paul. The writer of the Acts is concerned to show

³¹Gal. 1:18.

³²Dodd, op. cit., p. 16.

³³Dibelius, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

a definite scheme, both as to the kerygma and to the whole history of the church. We shall deal with this in more detail in later sections³⁴ and shall limit ourselves here to a consideration of the contents of the sermons contained in the Acts.

The Acts of the Apostles was written possibly about A.D. 90-100. Dodd believes, however, that the speeches in the early part may be good representations of the kerygma of the church at Jerusalem at a very early period.³⁵ Peter's first speech on the Day of Pentecost³⁷ has the same order and content as his speech to the people following the healing of the lame man,³⁸ to the Sanhedrin after the arrest,³⁹ the doublet of that speech,⁴⁰ and his speech to Cornelius.⁴¹ Therefore, we shall illustrate the kerygma common to all of them by examining the first speech.

The speech begins, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." That is, the age of fulfillment has dawned, the Messianic age has arrived. This is then

³⁴Supra, pp. 1-7 in chapter on Initiation.

³⁵Dodd, op. cit., p. 21.

³⁶Dibelius, op. cit., p. 16.

³⁷Acts 2:14-39.

³⁸Acts 3:12-26.

³⁹Acts 4:8-12. ⁴⁰Acts 5:17-40. ⁴¹Acts 10:34-43.

shown to have taken place through the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, who is the Christ: "God would set one of his [David's] descendents upon the throne," "a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs," "delivered up, crucified, killed," "but God raised him up," all according to the divine plan and foreknowledge. Because of this, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God, Lord of all powers in heaven and earth: "Exalted at the right hand of God" as foretold in Psalm 110. Now the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon the church as sign of Christ's present power and glory: "He has poured out this (the Holy Spirit) which you see and hear." Finally, there is the appeal for repentance, forgiveness, and promise of the Holy Spirit and salvation, which is the life of the Age to Come: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This pattern is seen in each of the speeches.

Acts places little stress upon the expected advent of the Lord.⁴² The stress is that the

⁴²Only Acts 3:20-21 alludes to it, and only Acts 10:42 refers to his being Judge of the quick and the dead.

unprecedented has already happened, God has visited and redeemed His people; the eschaton, the final and decisive act of God has already entered human experience. Acts here is consistent with Paul and the remembered words of Jesus: "The Kingdom of God has come upon you."⁴³ The prophecies are fulfilled, the mighty works have been seen, the Spirit has been poured out on the last days, the Messiah has come and has been exalted to power over all elements. The second coming has its place here, but not as something unrelated to what has already happened, but as its fulfillment. It will not introduce any new order of things, but finishes the work already so well begun. Therefore, not only in Paul, but in Acts also, the resurrection, exaltation, and second coming are inseparable parts of the single divine event; one is seen in the other. His advent is not so much looked for, but rather already is, as evidenced by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The kerygma and Mark 1:14.--Mark says that "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of God, and saying 'The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.'"⁴⁴ The writer of Acts, as indeed Paul also, believes that

⁴³Matt. 12:28.

⁴⁴Mark 1:14.

the time is fulfilled, as seen in the acts, teaching, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus who has become the Christ. The view is presented that the Kingdom of God is surely at hand; indeed, this is precisely what the presence of the Holy Spirit in the community evidences. All preaching therefore is for repentance and acceptance of the gospel in order that one may receive that Spirit and share in the Kingdom.

Therefore, in conjunction with the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God, we see that Acts lays great stress upon the Holy Spirit in the church as the sign of the New Age already begun. This is consistent with Paul's writings, who appeals to the Spirit in the church as a datum for arguing for the nature and condition of salvation,⁴⁵ as the guarantee of God's commission in Christ,⁴⁶ and the guarantee of our inheritance.⁴⁷

Conclusion.--On the basis of the evidence studied and presented, we can be quite certain that there was an early kerygma, which consisted of short outlines or summaries or formulas of the Christian faith. This kerygma was the essential content of preaching, and was

⁴⁵Gal. 3:2.

⁴⁶II Cor. 1:22.

⁴⁷Eph. 1:13-14.

given to new converts and missionaries as a guide for their lives and efforts.⁴⁸ That there was much variety in this kerygma in different areas and at different times is certain from the evidence in scripture. But it is equally certain that the kerygma was a constant reminder to people about the heart of the message, which was a particular piece of history which guaranteed their salvation. Only those items were contained in the kerygma which were basic to faith, and which were full of emotional power to bring about repentance and faith in the hearers. It was the evangelistic task, or missionary task, that determined the content of the preaching, for to "tell the good tidings" was the sole purpose of the first efforts of the church.

The kerygma consisted primarily of the events associated with the passion and resurrection. There is much difference in details, but the agreement on the essentials of death, resurrection, and evidences for the resurrection are abundant. And, since the preaching of the early witnesses was about their salvation, it is natural that the passion events occupied most of the content. For it was the events related to the death and resurrection of Jesus that gave the early Christians

⁴⁸Dibelius, op. cit., p. 21.

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their message of a triumphant Lord who rules and lives in the present in His church through the presence of the Spirit. The passion and resurrection alone were significant, since this alone was the climax of the act of God which brought an end to the present age of the world and inaugurated the Age to Come.

The kerygma contained little of the life of Jesus, his deeds, or his teachings. This is understandable, since they were only secondarily important for salvation. Such contents were important as witnessing to what was to happen in the death and resurrection, but of themselves were only signs of what lay in the future, and only after the resurrection could the deeds of Jesus be seen as actualizations of the power of God in the human Jesus.

The relation of kerygma to didache, preaching to teaching.--It is of interest to Christian educators to know whether the kerygma pertained only to preaching, or whether it had something to do with the teaching function of the church. C. H. Dodd⁴⁹ draws a clear distinction between preaching and teaching. Teaching, he believes, was basically ethical instruction.

⁴⁹Dodd, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

Preaching, on the other hand, was the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world. Therefore, he concludes, to preach the gospel was not to give moral instruction, which was the function of the teaching ministry of the church. Thus, the task of handing on the teachings of the Lord was set off from preaching and winning converts.

J. D. Smart⁵⁰ believes Dodd has done a valuable service in protesting against the insipid moralism of a pulpit which has forgotten the kerygma. But in alleging that in the biblical period teaching was basically moral instruction he has done a great dis-service to Christian education. Teaching then is moralistic in character, lacking the depth and power of the kerygma. In all periods of the church, primitive though to our day, teaching has sometimes become little more than ethical instruction, but inevitably it then becomes moralistic and legalistic. Teaching, if it is Christian, then as well as now, must be integrally related to preaching in bringing the kerygma as Word of God to bear upon learners. As he so rightly points out, the early church did not preach Christ and teach Christian

⁵⁰James D. Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), pp. 19-23.

ethics, but "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."⁵¹

Smart maintains the distinction between preaching and teaching by defining both preaching and teaching as a service of the Word of God. Preaching is "proclamation of this Word of God to man in his unbelief,"⁵² even though man may have much belief already. Teaching is addressed to the situation of the man who has repented and turned to God, even though in large measure he still is a man of unbelief. One may argue with Smart's definition of preaching and teaching, but he is biblically correct in maintaining that both are grounded in kerygma. Paul nowhere confines himself to moral instruction. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which is largely concerned with the ethical problems of that church, constantly appeals to the kerygma as the ground of all ethics. It is even said that Paul has no ethics, because all Christian behavior is the fruit of the Spirit, the result of the personal relationship between the individual believer and the present living Lord which results in the community of faith, the church. Even the epistle of James, which is dated very late and

⁵¹Acts 5:42.

⁵²Smart, op. cit., p. 18.

is perhaps a reaction against Paul, gives evidence that moral instruction is founded in the acts of God.

The kerygma of the early church manifests itself in preaching, but this preaching takes all forms; mission preaching, regular worship preaching, and catechumenal instruction.⁵³ Teaching is always in terms of the kerygma message, and is not merely ethical instruction. Nowhere in the New Testament do we have general rules of ethical instruction. The only ethics there are concrete, specific acts; instructions are intended to be signposts for the decisions which must be made ever anew. If there is any foundation principle for Christian ethics, it is to be found in the principle of love; love for God as expressed in love for neighbors.⁵⁴ But even this is founded on the kerygma, the redemptive history.⁵⁵

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.⁵⁶

Therefore, even the command of love is not a universal

⁵³Dibelius, op. cit., p. 15.

⁵⁴Matt. 22:40.

⁵⁵Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 230.

⁵⁶I John 4:10-11.

truth abiding apart from the kerygma, but it receives its specifically Christian significance by its anchorage in the history of revelation and redemption as seen in the "Christ-deed."⁵⁷

⁵⁷Cullmann, op. cit., p. 27.

The Confessions of Faith of the Early Church

Introduction.--In leading people toward significant church membership, our purpose is to lead them toward a faith which possesses their entire being, which gives them a firm conviction about what really matters, from which they can act in every situation.⁵⁸ We are primarily concerned with what they are, and not with what they say. But verbal witness to inner conviction is also necessary in order to arrive at a full realization of that conviction and to submit it to critical analysis by others, and to continually grow. A meaningful relationship with God and others realized through life in a community ought to lead to public attestation of that relationship, both in action, which is most important, but, also, in verbal declaration. One arrives at such faith through the witness of others, and he in turn has the social responsibility of witnessing to others of what is vital in his own life. In fact, unless a relationship with God and others is experienced so vividly and vitally that it must be confessed before men out of inner necessity, it is to be doubted whether any real and meaningful relatedness has occurred. The faith we desire for Christians is faith so vitally

⁵⁸J. H. Oldham, Real Life is Meeting (Greenwich: The Seabury Press, 1953), p. 12.

participated in that it must be "confessed" as well as "lived out."

But what is the faith that Christians confess? This is the question we face in this section. Our purpose is to determine the essential content of the confessions of faith of early Christian people as seen in the New Testament, so that it might throw light upon the faith we desire for our people. Although we must avoid the error of trying to reduce everything to a single cause, it is essential to know what the heart of the early faith was. For surely today we are asking about the essential meaning of the Christian faith. Likewise, the early Christians, also, were constantly asking themselves about the core of their faith. All preaching to those who were already believers was an attempt to interpret this essential content for their further enlightenment and growth. The writings of those times were within the fellowship, and attempted to express the implications of the faith in which they participated.

Distinction between kerygma and confessions.--

Some scholars, such as I. N. D. Kelly⁵⁹ make a sharp distinction between the early kerygma and the early

⁵⁹I. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds (London: Green and Company, 1950), p. 12.

Christian confessions of faith. His argument is that an overemphasis upon the kerygma tends to give a one-sided picture of the corpus of belief, because kerygma emphasizes exclusively Christology. Kelly maintains that the confessions of faith, on the other hand, give considerable attention to the Fatherhood of God and the teachings of Jesus.

In the present study there is no sharp distinction between kerygma and confessions of faith, for the faith declared in the kerygma was also the faith declared by people in their confessions of faith. The confessions of faith, just as the kerygma, were not fully thought-out rationalizations of the faith. They were basic attestations to an experiential relationship with Christ, the Lord, encountered within the Body of Christ, the church. This church was a creation of his Spirit, and the evidence of his Lordship. The kerygma was the proclamation of that event which created this community. The teachings were about life in this community, the life of the Spirit, created by that event. Confessions of faith were experiential declarations of this life in community resulting from this event. Therefore, our making a distinction between kerygma and confessions of faith is largely a matter of convenience. While the kerygma was essentially what the preacher declared, the

confessions of faith were the declarations made by the people of faith in their various activities of life.

The need for confessions.—Some kind of formula for guiding Christians was needed in the early church, just as it was necessary in kerygma form for missionaries. During the first generation after the resurrection these confessions were orally repeated, just as the contents of the Gospels circulated orally before being recorded. During the first century of the church, while there were no authoritative scriptures from the Christian era, these short summaries of the faith were especially needed to remind people of the essential content of the faith. During the church's second century, before the New Testament was canonized, a guide was needed to aid in extracting the important from the unimportant in the mass of writings competing for inclusion in the Christian scriptures. Therefore, the church at each step of the way had to ask itself about the common core of the tradition: "What is the essential element in our faith?" Every confession of faith is an attempt to answer this question, and even the scriptures can be considered as more detailed attempts to give the answer to this question.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Guttmann, op. cit., p. 11.

As the early church struggled to advance its work it had to combat the danger of influences and ideas foreign to its faith, as well as to recall ever-anew the significance of the faith it confessed. Paul says to the Romans, "you have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,"⁶¹ To the Thessalonians he says, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."⁶² Other writers refer to following "the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me,"⁶³ "guarding what has been entrusted to you,"⁶⁴ "our confession,"⁶⁵ "contend for the faith which was once for all delivered,"⁶⁶ and "your most holy faith,"⁶⁷

Undoubtedly "the faith" believed by any group of Christians at any time was felt by them to be "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Any controversy about the faith was naturally settled by appealing to an earlier authority, to a common faith agreed upon by all. Thus, the appeal to apostolic

⁶¹Rom. 6:17

⁶²II Thess. 2:15.

⁶³II Tim. 1:13.

⁶⁴I Tim. 6:20.

⁶⁵Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 10:23.

⁶⁶Jude 3.

⁶⁷Jude 20.

authority was not an attempt to glorify the past, nor to glorify the apostles themselves, but to safeguard for the present, and the future, those things which were felt to be the common possession of the faith. By A.D. 200 Tertullian claims to trace the traditions back through the apostles to Christ himself. Rufinus, about A.D. 404, tells how the Apostles, as they were about to set out for different parts of the world in their missionary tasks, got together and "compiled this brief token," with "each making the contribution he thought fit," and that this standard teaching was handed over to later times as the Apostles Creed.⁶⁸ Rufinus claimed that this was the "hallowed tradition which he had received." Undoubtedly it was the common belief in his day that it had come directly from the Apostles. But scholars now are confident that the Apostles Creed in its present form was definitely not the work of the Apostles, and that any attempt to reconstruct a uniform New Testament period formula of the faith⁶⁹ is bound to meet with failure, for the simple reason that there was no one agreed upon detailed formulation of the faith.

⁶⁸Kelly, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

⁶⁹J. L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), I, 63-65.

The confessions, of which we possess many in the New Testament, arose out of the multiplicity of circumstances which confronted the early church, and naturally, therefore, showed much variety.

This tradition, although of much variety in its content and itself the object of dispute, was considered, however, as of Apostolic origin and inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was this tradition, this confession of faith, which was responsible for the writings contained in the New Testament, and responsible for selecting the particular articles contained in our New Testament for canonization from among the many circulating articles at that time.

The confessions of faith arose out of the Sitz im Leben, the particular situations in the church's life which necessitated the kind of guidance a confession could give. This is well described by Kelly,⁷⁰ Cullmann,⁷¹ and the work of earlier writers to whom they are indebted, especially the form critics. Baptism, which will be considered in another section, was perhaps the most common occasion necessitating a confession,

⁷⁰Kelly, op. cit., p. 14.

⁷¹Oscar Cullmann, The Earliest Christian Confessions (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), pp. 18-34.

but by no means the only one. The weekly worship of the church necessitated it, as evidenced in liturgy⁷² and preaching.⁷³ A confession was used in the exorcism of demons, as evidenced by their being subject to Christ.⁷⁴ Justin says that a confession was pronounced to expel and subjugate the demons in the name of the Son of God.⁷⁵ Confessions were used in times of persecution, which accounts for the saying: "In the presence . . . of Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment unstained" ⁷⁶ And in formal correspondence brief confessions were utilized, both to gain a hearing and as data to be appealed to. Finally, the confessions were necessary in polemics against both heretical and pagan views.

What were the early confessions of faith which circulated in so many forms? What was its earliest expression? What was its content? How did it develop?

⁷²Phil. 2:6-11.

⁷³I Cor. 15:3-7.

⁷⁴Mark 1:24.

⁷⁵The Ante-Nicene Fathers, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (eds.) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953), I, 241.

⁷⁶I Tim. 6:13.

It is to these questions that we now turn and try to give an answer.

The earliest confessions: "Christ is Lord".--

The earliest confessions of faith are Christological. Many of these are single-clause short formulas declaring Jesus to be the Lord, or the Christ, or that Jesus Christ is Lord [underlining mine]:

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus be cursed" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁷

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.⁷⁸

Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.'⁷⁹

Jesus Christ is Lord.⁸⁰

As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him.⁸¹

Single clause formulas declaring Jesus to be the Son of God are also common to the New Testament:

He (the man with the unclean spirit) said, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the most High God?'⁸²

⁷⁷I Cor. 12:3.

⁷⁸Rom. 10:9.

⁷⁹Mark 8:29.

⁸⁰Phil. 2:11.

⁸¹Col. 2:6.

⁸²Mark 5:7.

And he (the Ethiopian eunuch) replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'⁸³

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.⁸⁴

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.⁸⁵

The discussion over the origination of the statement "Kyrios Christos," Christ is Lord, has had a long history, and can only be briefly summarized here. Bousset's⁸⁶ position is that the term "Lord" for Jesus, in the sense of meaning anything greater than "teacher," was of Hellenic derivation and had nothing to do with primitive Palestinian Christianity. Palestinian Christianity, he maintains, shared an eschatological messianic hope common to the Judaic thinking of the day. But the later Hellenic Christian community centering at Antioch, which was the community exerting its influence on Paul, did not share this eschatological hope of the coming Messiah. They developed a distinctive reverence of Jesus as the present Lord, which had nothing to do with the Palestinian-Judaic apocalyptic faith.

⁸³Acts 8:37.

⁸⁴I John 4:15.

⁸⁵Heb. 4:14.

⁸⁶W. Bousset, Kyrios Christos (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Rupprecht, 1913), pp. 77-104.

This "Kyrios Cult" was responsible for the title "Lord Jesus Christ" and, therefore, it is of later origin and could not have been the central affirmation of the earliest church.

Bultmann⁸⁷ is a current scholar who agrees with this position. He maintains that Judaism never titled the Messiah as "Lord," nor is this term found of Jesus in the oldest stratum of the Synoptics. When the vocative use of the term "Lord" is used, it is only the address of a pupil to his teacher, and was used in addressing any teacher. Wherever the term "Lord" has the special sense of "Messiah" it is due to the influence of Hellenic Christianity, and Hellenic Christianity is one step removed from the kerygma of the oldest church, the Palestinian Christian community.

The arguments of Bousset and Bultmann are not accepted by all scholars at this point. The neat division of early Christianity into Palestinian and Hellenic faiths has not been entirely substantiated, nor has the contention been proved that the term "Lord" is peculiar to one and not the other. Bultmann says that for the earliest church the kerygma meant that it was the "eschatological congregation," the

⁸⁷Bultmann, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 51.

congregation of the "end of days," the vestibule of God's Reign shortly to appear.⁸⁸ It was this because of "the Easter faith in Jesus' resurrection," which gives meaning to everything else. By virtue of the resurrection Jesus was proclaimed the Messiah, the eschatological occurrence, the decisive event through which God called His congregation. "Indeed, that is the real content of the Easter faith: God has made the prophet and teacher Jesus of Nazareth Messiah."⁸⁹ Thus, the later collecting of Jesus' teachings was entirely due to their being the words of one who had "become king"; past as well as future has significance due to the present exaltation of Christ. Bultmann says that the titles of Jesus illustrate that he is the eschatological salvation-bringer, and that although the earliest church did not consciously or explicitly recognize the full significance of its "Easter faith," it was implicit in the church's eschatological understanding of itself. Those who accept the term "Lord" as title of the earliest church do so partly because this seems to be one of the best terms for the earliest church to use to express its faith.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 37.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 43.

S. J. Case⁹⁰ tries to refute Bousset's position, by calling attention to the fact that Paul's thought has a definite eschatological feature, which was ignored by Bousset. Therefore, when Paul speaks of Christ's present Lordship, Paul is not minimizing Jesus' Messianic function, but refers specifically to that powerful personage who has significance for the community's life. It was not peculiar to Paul or to Hellenic Christianity, but was an item of faith for Palestinian Christians and was rooted in Jewish foundations. The "Mar" that the Christians used in "Maranatha" signified not only "teacher," but also "The Teacher," that is, "Our Lord, Come!."

V. Taylor⁹¹ reached the conclusion that the term "Lord" was not used of Jesus in any Messianic sense during his lifetime. However, he is convinced that it was applied to the Risen Lord by the earliest disciples in Palestine as well as in Hellenic areas.

J. Weiss⁹² grants that the title "Kyrios" came from Hellenic influences, and that it arose in an

⁹⁰S. J. Case, The Evolution of Early Christianity (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1914), pp. 108-120.

⁹¹V. Taylor, The Names of Jesus (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1953), pp. 43-51.

⁹²J. Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity (New York: Wilson-Erickson, Inc., 1937), p. 741.

Hellenic cultus. But the only explanation, he feels, of why they applied that particular title to Jesus, the human being who was exalted as Risen, was that Jesus already had the religious veneration and significance of that title for the Palestinian community, and that the Palestinian community had already called the Risen One "Lord." He grants that "Maran," "Our Lord," was used of many teachers, including, perhaps, the human Jesus. But in the light of the resurrection the appellation "Maran" took on the meaning "Our Lord." A. E. J. Rawlinson⁹³ agrees with this conclusion.

John Knox⁹⁴ recognizes that the Greek term "Kyrios" had connotations as used by Hellenists which were different from the Jewish meaning of the Aramaic "Mar." But he is certain of the use of the term "Lord" by Christians prior to its emergence into Gentile environments, and that the term "Lord Jesus Christ" is definitely an expression of the most primitive faith.

Oscar Cullmann, together with other German scholars whom he quotes⁹⁵ believes that all early

⁹³A. E. J. Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1926), p. 237.

⁹⁴Knox, op. cit., p. 71.

⁹⁵Cullmann, The Earliest Christian Confessions, p. 54.

formulas have roots in two basic ideas: Jesus Christ is Lord, and Jesus is the Son of God. He sees all references to Davidic Sonship or the later creedal statements about being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary as attempts at explanation of the confession "Jesus is Son of God." Likewise, references to suffering, crucifixion, death, resurrection, ascension, elevation to the right hand of God, and judgment are attempts to explain the term "Christ is Lord." However, even these two basic formulas are different aspects of the same truth: the elevation to the dignity of Lord, as a consequence of his death and resurrection, is itself the chief testimony to his divine Sonship.⁹⁶ He finds many confessions where the Divine Sonship idea is not included,⁹⁷ but never finds references which do not have implicit or explicit reference to the resurrection and exaltation.

In Romans 1 both of these confessions are together. But the one part, "his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh," was part of a common formula that Paul utilized in writing to the Romans. Its purpose in the formula was to prove that Jesus was

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 57.

⁹⁷I Cor. 15:3; I Peter 3:18-22; I Tim. 3:16.

the Son of God, Paul quotes the formula even though it had no special significance for him. What was crucial for Paul was the second part, that Jesus was "designated Son of God . . . by his resurrection from the dead," for it designates Jesus to be the Lord: "Jesus Christ the Lord." Divine Sonship does not explain the exaltation for Paul. Only the dignity which is Christ's by virtue of his resurrection and exaltation are important, and this alone gives proof to Jesus' divine origin. In the Bible there is reference made to Jesus' divine Sonship in explaining the exaltation. But this is a later attempt to rationalize what had taken place. For Paul, who does not give a rational explanation of what has happened but an experiential attestation to his present state of being "in Christ," it is the resurrection and exaltation which gives the ground for confidence in the pre-cross Jesus. Paul believed in Jesus' Sonship only because of his present Lordship. Experientially, this was true also for the entire early church.

It is the usual procedure to think of the life of Jesus in chronological terms; Jesus was born and lived, crucified, raised up, and exalted. The life of Jesus is usually taught in such a chronological sequence, and the basis of this is found in the four Gospels: Jesus was born, lived, suffered, died, and then rose again.

The "life of Christ" then usually means the life "remembered" previous to the crucifixion. This is the understanding in the early church as reflected in the book of Acts. Peter, at least as reflected in Acts, thinks first of the human Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, and then proclaims that "'this' Jesus God raised up."⁹⁸

John Knox⁹⁹ has rightly pointed out that for Paul the "life of Christ" is not the life that preceded his death, but that which followed it--the "present" life of the living Lord. Paul, when he thinks of Christ, thinks of the risen, exalted Christ who he experientially knows in faith, and not the historical figure who walked in Galilee. The Christ known to Paul follows the crucifixion, He is the "living" one, the "present, reigning Lord." When Paul thinks of "Christ who was crucified," it is not "Christ (the human, Galileean figure) who was crucified," but "Christ (the risen, exalted, present living Lord) who was crucified." "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Acts 2:32.

⁹⁹John Knox, Chapters in a Life of Paul (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 130.

¹⁰⁰Gal. 2:20.

Therefore, it is easy to see why Paul does not even mention the divine Sonship of Jesus in such a basic passage as I Corinthians 15, for only the resurrection is crucial for him. But, the fact that this is a borrowed formula common to the life of the church suggests that only the resurrection had significance for the rest of the church also. The divine Sonship is mentioned often, but its significance is always in the light of his resurrection; he who is the reigning living Lord "must" have been the Messiah all along. Thus, the Phillipian passage¹⁰¹ which shows the antithesis between flesh and spirit, between his humiliation and exaltation, does not mention his divine Sonship, but it is assumed in the thought "though he was in the form of God." The point of Paul's writing this section¹⁰² is to point toward Christ being the highly exalted one, so that "every knee should bow . . . and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." For Paul the whole story of the gospel could be told in this: Jesus was the Christ of God who is the present Lord of life by virtue of his resurrection.

It is interesting to note this verse in a non-Pauline letter: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the

¹⁰¹Phil. 2:6-11.

¹⁰²Kelly, op. cit., p. 18.

dead, descended from David."¹⁰³ This verse surprisingly catches a Pauline point of view, for it reverses the chronological order of Lordship and Sonship, resurrection and Davidic descent. Usually we find the formula in the chronological order, with Christ's origin coming before his resurrection and exaltation. What is true in the trinitarian formula, where God the Father is listed prior to the Son, is also true in this relation of Sonship and Lordship; the Sonship usually precedes the Lordship in the confession, even though the origin has significance only in the light of the resurrection.

One of the Old Testament ideas that was carried over into the kerygma and early confessions of faith was from Psalm 110: "The Lord says to my lord: 'sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'" This section is quoted by Jesus about Himself, according to Mark,¹⁰⁴ Matthew,¹⁰⁵ and Luke.¹⁰⁶ Paul quotes it in Romans¹⁰⁷ and I Corinthians,¹⁰⁸ It is found in Hebrews¹⁰⁹ and runs throughout most of that letter. It is basic to an understanding of Acts.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³II Tim. 2:8.

¹⁰⁵Matt. 22:44.

¹⁰⁷Rom. 8:34.

¹⁰⁹Heb. 1:13.

¹⁰⁴Mark 12:36.

¹⁰⁶Luke 20:42

¹⁰⁸I Cor. 15:25.

¹¹⁰Acts 2:34.

Dodd¹¹¹ believes that Psalm 110 is to be considered one of the fundamental texts actually quoted and named in the primitive kerygma, and surely we can find the whole idea of Lordship as an interpretation of this text.¹¹² This reigning at the right hand of God is a Lordship over both men and all other powers--in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, all of whom should bow to him and confess him. It is in the light of this text that we see the full significance of the confession "Christ is Lord": Christ is he who reigns, to whom all powers are subject, whether demons, sin, death, hell, or satan himself. This present reign, with power on earth and heaven, is the intended expression in the early confessions of faith.

The developed form of the Apostolic confession.--

The early confessions of faith in Christ alone was not even of Christ as one part of a trinitarian confession. The trinitarian formulation was only gradually developed due to early liturgical and catechetical purposes.¹¹³ The confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" was practical for

¹¹¹Dodd, op. cit., p. 15.

¹¹²Gullmann, The Earliest Christian Confessions, p. 59.

¹¹³Ibid., chap. 4.

the church in the beginning, for at first the believers were largely Jews, for whom belief in One God who acts in history was part of their faith prior to any Christian belief. Where faith in God was actually expressed, it was as faith in God as a function of faith in Christ: He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But as gentiles began coming into the church, it became necessary to formulate also belief in One God.

Especially against the gnostics, a confession was needed expressing the congruous relationship between God the Creator and the Son Redeemer. Therefore, bipartite confessions were developed for guidance against Hellenic dualistic conceptions, or as amplification of the basic Christological expression of faith. Cullman traces the development of the third article of the Apostles Creed to the need for a statement of baptism. The resurrection of the dead, originally a function of Christ, also became a function of the Spirit.

Kelly¹¹⁴ takes issue with Cullmann's conclusions. He is quite in agreement that the early Christians propagated the unique and distinctly Christian element, which was Christ. But, he insists that the trinitarian framework is to be found throughout the New Testament,

¹¹⁴Kelly, op. cit., pp. 12ff.

and, although only partially expressed, was waiting to be realized and expressed completely. Thus, although the assertion that the "Apostolic tradition" was Apostolic is incorrect if it means that the Apostles composed it, it is correct in the sense that the germ of the trinitarian truth was pregnant in the earliest faith of the church.

Albright¹¹⁵ seems to share Kelly's view. He contends that the trinitarian idea of God, which has immeasurably enriched the concept of monotheism without in the least detracting from its unique character, is seen in the Gestalt figure of the confessions in its entirety very early, but the details and implications are only developed gradually in trinitarian form through process to consciousness.

Cullmann says essentially the same thing as Kelly and Albright. Faith in Christ surely is the only object of confession in most early confessions. But Cullman says that an explanation of faith in Christ alone requires amplification into faith in God the Father and the Holy Spirit, which "really constitute a part of the essential substance of faith in Christ."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 304.

¹¹⁶Cullmann, The Earliest Christian Confessions, p. 49.

The trinitarian development was needed for the same reason a confession was needed in the first place; as the early church needed a summary of its essential faith , so also the meaning of this summary needed to be expressed in summary form, which is the trinitarian conception.

As developed, the trinitarian creed expresses what was integral and essential in faith in Christ. The Christian faith is entirely Christological. The whole story of redemptive history is a Christ story; Christ the Mediator of the Creation, the Suffering Servant, Lord of the present, and the returning Son of Man—all the same Christ in the execution of his functions in the successive stages of time in redemptive history.¹¹⁷ Therefore, although the Apostles Creed goes back only to the sixth century, and the Baptismal Creed back into the second century, both go back to apostolic times and have their roots in the first beginnings of the church of the Apostolic age. But, as this is expressed in the creed, the position of the three articles give a false perspective to the essence of the faith. God the Father appears first. This seems logical as expressing the relationship of Father to Son.

¹¹⁷ Cullmann, Christ and Time, p. 109.

But this suggests that one moves from faith in God the Father to faith in Christ. Such a thought is foreign to the New Testament, which is wholly Christocentric: Christ is first, the object of faith, the mediator, the revealer of God, the source of faith. Thus, the command of Christ to "baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"¹¹⁸ is consistent with the later trinitarian formulation (leaving aside the question of the origination of this passage) and is correct when seen in a Christological setting. However, the order of Paul's benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all,"¹¹⁹ is much more in keeping with the essential spirit of the early church's faith.

Conclusion.—The empirically established faith in the present, living Lordship of Christ, who is Lord by virtue of his resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of God, was the historical core of the earliest confessions of faith. The present Lordship was what counted, and from which the past and future gained meaning. Because Christ was Lord of the present, his origin and fleshly existence and crucifixion were to be

¹¹⁸Matt. 28:19.

¹¹⁹II Cor. 13:14.

remembered as essential in the divine salvation-process, This did not minimize the historical past, the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth, for without that existence there would be no resurrection and no present Lordship. But the historical existence had meaning only in the light of what happened in the resurrection and exaltation, and this was known only in the apprehension of Christ as present, living, reigning Lord. Likewise, the early Christians believed in the eventual eschatological triumph, but only because that triumph had already been won, the Kingdom of God had already begun to dawn, God had already sent his Messiah, the Spirit had already been given, Jesus was already the Christ and therefore Lord.

All that Christians wrote and preached, and all that they tried to express in the Scriptures, and in the Apostles Creed by talking of God the Father and the Holy Spirit, was an attempt to unfold the meaning of the faith that Jesus, by virtue of his crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation, is the Christ, the present Lord. Christian faith is wholly Christological: all that Christians say about the past or about the future results from the certainty that Christ is Lord, he had triumphed, and he reigns at the present. Christian faith looks backward to the human figure, Jesus

of Nazareth; but not exclusively backward, otherwise it would be static and powerless. Christian faith looks forward to the culmination of things; but not exclusively forward, otherwise it would be irrelevant. Christian faith is primarily about the present, but a present which is intimately related to past and future. The present is the time of Christ's complete Lordship, a time of grace, a time of salvation.

Initiation in the Early Church

The confusion resulting from the Acts.--The history of Christendom has been confused by the inconsistent picture given of initiation into the Christian faith presented in the Book of Acts. The author seems to present initiation by two steps: water baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Spirit.

Sometimes the author seems to refer to only one integral act of water baptism and the imparting of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecost experience was that the Holy Spirit was given to those who "were all together at one place"; no baptism took place at that time, for presumably they had all previously been baptized with "John's baptism," and were only awaiting the gift of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit then is merely the

completion of the baptism begun under John and awaiting its fulfillment in the gift of the "Holy Spirit and fire."¹²⁰ To strengthen this view that the gift of the Spirit is an integral part of the baptism experience, we need but continue with the narrative. After the preaching by Peter at Pentecost, he exhorts them "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Spirit."¹²¹ The fact that he tells of the baptism of some three thousand souls who continued to devote themselves to the apostles' teachings and fellowship indicates that they, too, had received the gift of the Spirit, presumably when they were baptized.

Likewise, at the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch,¹²² the Spirit of the Lord is declared to have been present. Although it does not say that he came to the eunuch, but rather to Philip who was caught up,¹²³ it is to be assumed that the cause of the eunuch's rejoicing was that he had received the complete promise,

¹²⁰Luke 3:16.

¹²¹Acts 2:38

¹²²Acts 8:26-40.

¹²³G. W. H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1951), p. 64.

forgiveness and the Spirit.

Likewise, in the case of the baptism of Lydia,¹²⁴ or the Phillippian jailer,¹²⁵ or the Corinthian synagogue ruler Crispus,¹²⁶ nothing is said about receiving the Spirit, and it is assumed that this was part of being baptized. But in the case of the Roman centurion Cornelius,¹²⁷ the coming of the Spirit to this Gentile and those with him came unexpectedly, ~~preceding~~ baptism. Baptism, as an act with water, only followed after the reception of the Spirit. Also, in the case of Philip's preaching to the Samaritans¹²⁸ the people were baptized, and only later upon the visit of Peter and John from Jerusalem did they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of their hands. Likewise, when Acts relates the conversion of Paul, he says that Ananias was commissioned to lay his hands on Paul, and that upon doing so he received his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit, after which he rose and was baptized.¹²⁹ Also later, at Ephesus¹³⁰ those who were baptized only of the baptism of John

¹²⁴ Acts 16:14.

¹²⁶ Acts 18:8.

¹²⁸ Acts 8:4-25.

¹³⁰ Acts 18:24; 19:7.

¹²⁵ Acts 16:33.

¹²⁷ Acts 10:44-48.

¹²⁹ Acts 9:10-22.

the Baptist by the work of Apollos, were baptized and with the laying on of Paul's hands they received the Holy Spirit.

Why the apparent inconsistent accounts in Acts? Why is it that sometimes nothing is said about receiving the Spirit and the laying on of hands, while at other times baptism is mentioned as preceding the laying on of hands, or else the laying on of hands precedes baptism? It is normally thought that the laying on of hands was a regular part of the initiatory ceremony in primitive Christianity, and that this laying on of hands was a function of the Apostles or those commissioned by them. Normally this laying on of hands was a part of baptism, but occasionally it had to occur separately, either before or after baptism.

This picture appears to be deliberately built up in Acts. Acts is inconsistent at this point. If the laying on of hands was the common practice and indispensable sign of the presence of the Spirit, why didn't he refer to it in the Pentecost experience? Why did not the author tell about Philip laying his hands upon the eunuch, especially since this was the only opportunity for the eunuch to receive it? And if it is assumed that Philip did lay his hands upon the eunuch to impart the Spirit, then why did he not also

do so earlier in Samaria, where it specifically tells that he did not, but waited for the Apostles to come for this purpose? Why do we not hear anything about the laying on of hands at the baptism of Lydia, the Philippian jailer, or Crispus? Especially, since Paul refers to the many gifts of the Spirit,¹³¹ why does he nowhere mention or allude to such a practice? Our conclusion is that the laying on of hands was not a separate initiatory act which imparted the Spirit, but part of the single initiatory act of water baptism. However, it is our conclusion that the author of the Acts, writing in a later period, found the concept of the laying on of hands a useful device to convey his particular purpose in the book of Acts. We shall now proceed to an explanation of this conclusion.

It is generally accepted that in the second volume of Luke-Acts, Luke is seeking to tell of the expansion of Christianity.¹³² But it has not been so generally accepted, nor is it so obvious, that he has purposely set out to enhance the role of Jerusalem as the center of the movement and source of direction and control of the expansion of Christianity,¹³³ or that

¹³¹I Cor. 12:1-12.

¹³²Knox, Chapters in the Life of Paul, p. 21.

¹³³Ibid., p. 25.

he strives to enhance the prestige of the Twelve Apostles in directing the movement so as to insure harmony and singleness of life and doctrine.¹³⁴ Luke had an ultimate purpose, and to achieve it he felt free, just as he had in writing the Gospel of Luke, to change words, sources, and materials to suit his own literary taste and purpose in writing.¹³⁵

If the above argument is granted, then it is understandable why the several accounts are told just as they are. The Samaritan visit¹³⁶ represents a crucial stage in the advance of Christianity: the significant events are now beginning to happen outside the vicinity of Jerusalem. Therefore, apostolic approval of what happens is necessary if Luke's purpose in writing is to be achieved. Therefore, this crucial episode required special methods. Philip baptized, but it remained for Peter and John to give official approval to this new expansion, which the author indicated by their laying on of hands. But to see in this action the effective symbol for the gift of the Spirit is to give it undue significance; it was primarily a symbol of fellowship, approval, and

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 27.

¹³⁵Ibid., pp. 21-25.

¹³⁶Acts 8:4-19.

solidarity.¹³⁷ If, as we shall contend later, membership in the church means to be placed in the sphere of the Spirit's activity, or to state it differently, if to receive the Spirit means to be placed within the dynamic, living Body of Christ, the church, then for Luke to associate the apostles' visit with the gift of the Spirit was understandable, for the apostles' approval and testimony was synonymous with the church's--and there is where the Holy Spirit operates. Thus, this "Samaritan Pentecost" happens when believing people (the Samaritans) are in the fellowship of those (apostles) who know of the historical event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify to his Present Lordship. But all this does not justify our assuming that the laying on of hands was the usual and indispensable part of initiation in the early church.

In another place in Acts¹³⁸ the author tells how Cornelius received the Holy Spirit directly, without mediation. Obviously, this is not a typical case, for it happens nowhere else. Why then did it happen, or at least, why did Luke write that it did happen? The answer is to be found in the light of Luke's

¹³⁷Lampe, op. cit., p. 70.

¹³⁸Acts 10:44.

purpose in writing. In tracing the spread of Christianity from its small beginnings out to wider horizons--Samaria, Roman Gentiles, Paul, Macedonia, and finally Rome itself--authority must be found for each new step. God Himself began the work on Pentecost: God alone continues it now as he pours out His Spirit on a Gentile. A second, purely gentile, Pentecost, allows the writer to step over this crucial moment in the advancement of Christianity. God Himself has given His Spirit to these Romans and the apostles witnessed it; therefore, that which the church does is apostolic and of God. In the narrative, after seeing that the Holy Spirit had already been given, Peter can only ask, "Can anyone forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit?" The implication is that since they have received the Spirit, which is an integral part of the baptism procedure, it is only logical to complete the act, water-baptism, which is so integrally related to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The introduction of the work of Paul is another crucial turning point in Luke's account of the spread of Christianity. Therefore, he had Paul received into the fellowship and possessed of the Spirit by means of the laying on of hands from Ananias,¹³⁹ after which he

¹³⁹Acts 9:20-22.

is baptized. But of all the items in Acts which are open to question, this is the most questionable. Surely Paul knows nothing of a commissioning by Ananias or the apostles or any other human. He is ready to rest his whole gospel and apostleship upon this point.¹⁴⁰ But Luke feels free to alter the events in this case, in order to more effectively make his point. This incident is enough to make us question the allusions elsewhere to the importance of the laying on of hands both as an essential act and as an effective symbol for conveying the Spirit. Lampe¹⁴¹ claims that Luke's use of the laying on of hands is not so much concerned with giving the Spirit as it is with giving formal recognition to the commissioning of workers for the apostolic or missionary tasks of the church.

The Ephesian episode¹⁴² represents Paul laying his hands upon the people and thereby conveying the Holy Spirit. But if Ephesus was the center of Hellenic missionary activity, we should not be surprised to find Luke again dramatizing the progress of the missionary spread at this crucial point by the laying on

¹⁴⁰Gal. 1-2.

¹⁴¹Lampe, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁴²Acts 19:1-7.

of hands. Not only is this Ephesian Pentecost thus "approved" by God, but it is done through the line of God--Apostles at Jerusalem--Paul--Ephesians, thus keeping the activity directed from and centered in both Jerusalem and the apostles. However, Paul nowhere hints at such an instance as is here pictured, nor does he suggest at any point such a practice as the laying on of hands for the impartation of the Spirit. Rather, it is in baptism, as we shall soon see, that Paul speaks of the Spirit's work, although he nowhere restricts it to baptism alone.

In Acts, the Spirit is not the personal indwelling of the Risen Lord. Rather, the Spirit is presented as the impersonal power which directs the missionary efforts of the church as it spreads to the ends of the earth. It is not the continuing activity of the Christ in the sense that people "live in the Spirit," or that the Spirit "lives in them.": The Spirit is pictured as directing and empowering them to effectively spread the gospel. As a missionary tract for the purpose of welding the churches together, it may have been effective. But, by the late second century an adverse effect upon the thinking of the church is evident. John, in his gospel, apparently tries to deal with the confusion created by the Acts. His gospel, probably appearing

shortly after the writing of Acts, reminds his readers that new life comes not only by water, but by water and the Spirit.¹⁴³ Water-baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit must not be disassociated from each other. Likewise, Tertullian¹⁴⁴ tries to explain how the Spirit and water were associated together even in Genesis 1:1, indicating that the two were having difficulty remaining together. By the third century¹⁴⁵ the breakdown of the rite of initiation into two separate acts of baptism and confirmation or the laying on of hands was complete, and with it the dynamic understanding of the baptism, death, and resurrection of Christ was split asunder.

Jesus' own baptism.—The confusion resulting from Acts about the initiatory rites of Christianity can only be cleared up by looking afresh at Jesus' own baptism and seeing its significance for the early church. We know that Jesus did not originate baptism, for Judaism already practiced the baptism of proselytes, and John, who baptized Jesus, contended that all Jews needed baptism for forgiveness of their sins, due to

¹⁴³John 3:3-5.

¹⁴⁴The Ante-Nicene Fathers, 3, 670.

¹⁴⁵Lampe, op. cit., chap. 7.

the impending coming of the Messiah. But if baptism was not originated by the Christian Church, at least it felt that something new had been added to it in the Christian practice.

In the Synoptics John himself explains the difference between his baptism and that which was to come: "I baptize you with water for repentance; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."¹⁴⁶ Christian baptism, which can only come when the Messiah comes, is not transitory or preparatory, as John's baptism was. Rather, it was to be final, leading into the Kingdom of God.

John's baptism appropriately used the act of washing in water, for its effect was cleansing, the forgiveness of sins. Christian baptism also kept water-baptism, because it too effected the forgiveness of sins. But in addition, it imparted the Holy Spirit. Reception of the Holy Spirit is not to be considered as a separate addition, but intimately related to the forgiveness of sins; in fact, the imparting of the Spirit is what fulfills the forgiveness of sins. What had been in John temporary and incomplete, now becomes permanent and complete. But why is this so?

¹⁴⁶ Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; Mark 1:8.

The answer lies in the meaning of Jesus' own baptism. The historicity of the baptism, and all its parts, does not concern us here. What does concern us is the interpretation given to it by the church, as reflected in the scriptures. Each of the Synoptics tells us that a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." It is significant that here they quote Psalms and Isaiah. From the Psalms¹⁴⁷ "You are my son, today I have begotten you," Jesus is designated the Royal Son, the Messiah so eagerly expected. But from Isaiah¹⁴⁸ the quotation takes on more complete meaning; this beloved son, who is so pleasing, is no other than the suffering servant. The baptism is not some isolated event in Jesus life: in the baptism Jesus is confirmed as both the Son of God and the Suffering Servant.¹⁴⁹ In his baptism the church saw the whole life, death, and resurrection portrayed; only in the cross does the baptism of Jesus find its fulfillment.

The question had always faced the church why Jesus, if he were the Messiah, would have to be baptized. John asks, "I need to be baptized by you, and

¹⁴⁷Psalms 2:7.

¹⁴⁸Isa. 42:1.

¹⁴⁹Oscar Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1950), p. 19.

do you come to me?" But Jesus replies: "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness."¹⁵⁰ What the church could not understand before the crucifixion, it could understand after the resurrection; Jesus must need be baptized for all men, that righteousness might be fulfilled. Jesus himself heard the confirmation of this at his baptism; he was commissioned at his baptism to fulfil righteousness for all men. He was baptized, not for himself, for that would have been superfluous for the early church, but for mankind and their sins. His baptism would then be a general baptism for all men¹⁵¹ which, through the completed act of his death and resurrection, would be effective for all men.

But is this conclusion justified? Yes, according to Jesus' own use of the word baptism. Baptism, to him, meant far more than a water-act for repentance. It meant to suffer and die for his people as seen in his completed life. He says, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And in conclusion of

¹⁵⁰Matt. 3:15.

¹⁵¹Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, p. 20.

this conversation Mark records that he said, "For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."¹⁵² Baptism is closely related to his whole mission; definitely by the early church, and perhaps by Jesus himself. This is easily seen in Luke: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!"¹⁵³ Baptism for Jesus was more than the water-act already gone through; baptism could only be completed and fulfilled in his death and resurrection. The writer of the Gospel of John, who is commenting on the Synoptic accounts, indicates his view of the significance of Jesus' baptism. He does not record the water-act of baptizing Jesus, but he does tell of the significance of it: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! he who said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."¹⁵⁴

Jesus' own baptism then symbolizes his whole life and work. He fulfills the Old Testament prophecy when he received fully the Spirit of God: "I have put

¹⁵²Mark 10:38-45.

¹⁵³Luke 12:50.

¹⁵⁴John 1:29-34.

my spirit upon him," and he assumes the Spirit in terms of his work as the Suffering Servant of God: "and he will bring forth justice to the nations." All righteousness is fulfilled in the baptism-death-resurrection of Jesus, for when he assumed the role of the Suffering Servant of God he received the Spirit; this righteousness belongs to the believer when he is baptized and partakes of the forgiveness of sins and receives the Spirit.

Paul's views of baptism.--

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. . . . So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.¹⁵⁵

For Paul, those who are "in Christ" have participated in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and this was effected in the believer's baptism. Baptism and death go together for the believer, just as resurrection and life go together. And all of this is a present possession for those who are "united with him." Baptism means burial to sin and death, and it

¹⁵⁵Rom. 6:3-5, 11.

also is the necessary prerequisite for emergence and resurrection and walking in newness of life, the life in the Spirit.¹⁵⁶ Paul surely does not regard the action of the Spirit as bound to baptism, for in his own case it was not so. He knows that the spirit "blows where it listeth," that it can seize a man and lead him to justifying faith, for he personally had experienced just this. And yet being "in Christ" was associated with the water-act of baptism; "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."¹⁵⁷ The sequence of immersion and emergence, death and resurrection, is one single creative act of God through Christ in us. The Christian experience of baptism is a re-enactment in every believer of Christ's own baptism, symbolizing death and resurrection, historically and effectually carried out in Jesus Christ's own life, death and resurrection, and experientially carried out within the believer's own life.

The question of infant baptism.—The question of infant baptism in the New Testament cannot be solved from the Scriptures themselves, because nowhere in Scripture is this particular question faced. No case

¹⁵⁶Gal. 2:20.

¹⁵⁷I Cor. 6:11.

can be made either for it or against it. Surely evidence can be produced where whole families were baptized, but this is not proof that children were baptized. On the other hand, it can be pointed out that where baptism is mentioned, there are confessions of faith. But, this can be accounted for by the fact that whenever occasion arises for the writers to discuss baptism, it is in the situation of adults who are converts from Judaism or heathenism, and, therefore, necessarily occasion a confession of faith.¹⁵⁸ The lack of evidence for the baptism of infants is matched by the lack of evidence for the baptism of the grown children of believing parents. The whole question of infant baptism cannot be answered with scriptural proof about its practice, but must be decided on the ground of the consistency of New Testament doctrine. Is infant baptism compatible with the conception of the gospel and baptism which has been discussed?

It seems, in the light of the present investigation, that baptism is a reality situation in which God actually makes persons participants in the body of Christ, through the Holy Spirit's operation. Therefore, infant baptism is entirely compatible with such an

¹⁵⁸ Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, p. 26.

understanding. That a child can be a recipient of such grace, as a passive object, is perhaps the best illustration of the redemptive purpose of God. Adults never have the same degree of passivity toward the action of God as has a child, who grows into participation.

The contention that in the infant baptism act faith is supplied vicariously by the congregation of believers is absurd. However, the faith of the congregation is a necessary ingredient. It is in and through the faith of the congregation that the Holy Spirit operates. It is the faith of the congregation which connects the event of God-in-Christ with the infant being baptized; the faith of the congregation is the medium by which the Holy Spirit operates to convey God's Grace. The church, the communion of believers who live under the Lordship of Christ, is the effective means by which the Spirit works. Therefore, in infant baptism the faith of the congregation is necessary, not as a vicarious substitute for the child, but to enable the Holy Spirit to operate within the life of the child, drawing him unto faith.

In the New Testament, baptism has a confessional character, because it is the baptism of adult converts. Because adults cannot be entirely passive individuals, but are always actively involved in the faith process,

it is necessary that adults share the faith of the congregation. The reality of what happens in the act of baptism must always be accepted and renewed. Baptism does not insure inevitably continual participation within the Body of Christ. The reality of what happens in the act of baptism does insure that God's Grace is operative for that individual, but in the continuing life of the person affirmation of this grace is necessary. Just as a child is born in his physical birth without his consent, so then must will to live and actively promote his own growth, so also must the baptized person continually share the responsibility for the regenerative process. Baptism is an accomplished beginning, a reality act. However, it is a beginning for which continuation is essential. Therefore, confessions of faith, in which one affirms the Lordship of Christ and affirms the redemptive experience manifested in the life of the church and affirms his openness to the power of God acting through the community of faith, are necessary prerequisites for growth in grace, life in the Spirit. Therefore, adults, being baptized must confess their faith.

Conclusions regarding initiation.—The one incontestable fact about early Christianity is that the early followers of Jesus were convinced that they were sharing

in the Spirit of God, and that the presence of this Spirit was the crucial turning point in history. The existence of the church is the evidence of what it witnesses to: Jesus Christ who lived, died, and rose to come to them as Spirit. The church was the people of the Spirit; the church's existence is the absolute indisputable proof of the historicity of the "event" of Jesus' death and resurrection.¹⁵⁹ That "God was in Christ," that Jesus "was," that he influenced those who became the church, and that He was actually present within the life of the community, is not provable by logic or documentary evidence; it is empirically attested to by the church's existence.¹⁶⁰ The New Testament, the kerygma, confessions of faith and practice of baptism are all evidences of the fact that Jesus was remembered both as one past and as presently the Lord. Whatever the historical value of the Pentecost story, we know that following some experience these Christians were convinced that they shared the Holy Spirit in their community of faithful people.

In the New Testament the Spirit is generally identified with the presence of the Risen Lord in his

¹⁵⁹John Knox, Criticism and Faith (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), chap. 2.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

church. Those who are "in the Spirit" are justified and sanctified, precisely because they are in union with Christ. Baptism is the effective means of uniting one with Christ, for by it we participate in the whole baptism of Jesus, which was his fulfillment of the task of the Son of God and Suffering Servant through life, death and resurrection.

The faith of the early church, as seen through the kerygma and the confessions of the early believers, was that in the historical appearance of Jesus upon earth, and in his death and resurrection, God had decisively entered into human history to effect the redemption of mankind. It was specifically because it was an event, a once-for-all event, as every historical event is, that the Christian church was confident that a new age had dawned, the age of participation in the Spirit of God. To be a Christian was to believe in the Lordship of Christ. To be baptized was to be baptized into the death of Christ, in order that as he was victorious over death and all that it signified, likewise believers would be victorious also, by virtue of their participation in the church of Christ, which was to be a participant in the age to come. To be part of the life of the Spirit was the same thing as to be baptized.

Baptism was not transitory or preparatory, as John's baptism had been, but it was final and complete. Jesus, through his own baptism, which was completed only in his death and resurrection, effected a general baptism, a general resurrection, for all those who were "in him."

Christian faith was based upon an event, the act of God, seen in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. This act evidenced the Grace of God toward mankind. This act of God took place independent of any decision or understanding on the part of man. The act of God was initiated by Him, carried through by Him, without cooperation from man and in a large degree in spite of man. It is in the light of this act of God that baptism must be understood. The old concept of baptismal grace, or prevenient grace, contained a fundamental truth. God not only loves people, but is the sole instigator of love. The meaning of baptism is essentially that God acts on behalf of man; his action is effected through the water-act. Baptism is not "symbolical" of effecting entrance into the Christian church; baptism does not "tell" a person that he is part of the church of Christ; baptism is not a magical act; and baptism is not an act which is effective only after it is completed in time by arrival at real faith. Baptism is essentially an act of God, in which man is

passively set within God's church. The person really enters a new life, but in the act of entrance he is a passive person; what happens, happens to him.¹⁶¹ Baptism is a reality situation like a physical birth in which the person actively responds to the process of birth, but does not determine the birth itself. His physical birth is determined from the outside. The person, in baptism, is a recipient of God's love. God is loving, in spite of the character of the person. God hopes that through such love the person might be won to a responsive love.

Such an understanding of baptism is consistent with our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in the body of Christ. "By one Spirit were we all baptized into one body."¹⁶² In baptism, a person is made part of the body of Christ, the church, through which the Holy Spirit operates. Therefore, it is entirely synonymous to say that one is baptized and one has received the Holy Spirit. The act of baptism is a reality act, in which one partakes of the resurrection power, the redemptive love of God in Christ.

¹⁶¹Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, p. 31.

¹⁶²I Cor. 12:13.

Paul and the Kerygmatic Element

Introduction.—Those who have studied the life of Paul, and especially his conversion experience, have often made one of two common mistakes: either they completely made it a work of God which allowed no room for human explanations, or they have given an entirely mechanistic explanation which allowed no room for the purpose or work of God. Neither view does justice to the facts, nor to our concept of man. The first denies his freedom and his responsible position. It undercuts the purposes of education, and it rests upon a world-view which is pre-modern. But the second is just as much at fault, for it too denies his freedom by conceiving man as the mere mechanical reactor to the stimulations that come upon him from society, his instincts, and his animal nervous system.

The first view, the traditional view, thinks that to consider natural causes means that it can not be also supernatural at the same time. The old battle of science versus religion is still being fought; it is still held that to admit one is to deny the other. But this is not the issue for us. To explain an event in natural ways that are quite normal and predictable does not necessarily deny that God has something to do with them: it

merely changes the manner in which God confronts man. The genius of religious giants has always been that they have experienced the working of God in the most mundane of experiences.

The other extreme in looking at the life of Paul, the mechanistic-psychological view, considers his life exclusively in mechanical terms. Most stimulus-response psychology, and associationism of all types, have thought of the human as an "empty organism," whose only purpose is to react to stimuli from outside.¹⁶³ The whole reactive pattern is determined by what appears to be the best way of reducing tension within the individual. Whether the reaction is to seek pleasure or to avoid pain, whether in response to external objects or to internal instinctive pressures, the individual is a mere mechanical organism which responds in the most fitting tension-reducing way. Paul's life, especially his conversion, is then interpreted as the resolving of his high tension state. Our quarrel with this interpretation is not only that it has no room for the supernatural, but that it has no room for the truly human.

Our task in this chapter is to try to understand

¹⁶³G. W. Allport, Becoming (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 8.

the kerygmatic element in the dynamic life of Paul. We must bring the insights of the present day to bear upon the historical events. Our task is a study in biblical research, but it must be done with one eye on the Scriptures and the other on our best insights in psychology, sociology, theology, and so forth. Only in this way can we understand the kerygmatic element in Paul's life.

Reliability of the biblical sources for the study of the kerygmatic element in Paul.—It has been usual for studies of Paul's life to be based upon the historical data in the Acts account, and then to use this as a basis for understanding the writings of Paul. At first sight this appears the most logical thing to do, because Acts seems to be essentially an historical account of the rise of the church and Paul is given a fair share, if not more than his share, in the discussion.

However, scholars have known for a long time that the Acts account cannot be entirely relied upon for its historical data. The writer of Acts had a particular motive in writing his account, and this motive colored every thing he wrote. He was writing for Christians some sixty or eighty years after the events and in the middle of conflicts that were threatening the very

existence of the church. Therefore, it was his purpose to show that God had always guided the church around every crisis in a wonderful way, so that the unity and apostolicity of its message was constant from the beginning until his present time.

However, the church was not united; its message was not fixed and agreed to by all in its larger implications beyond the basic kerygmatic message.¹⁶⁴ From the very beginning differences of interpretation of the faith had threatened to disrupt the church's progress. The Acts account, which tried to cover over these differences for the sake of a larger purpose, however worthy, was bound to color the facts.

Therefore, in this study we shall follow the procedure of using Paul's epistles as the primary source. Although Paul is quite obviously biased toward his own point-of-view, at least what he says can be evaluated in terms of that point-of-view. His writings have the additional advantage at certain points, especially Galatians,¹⁶⁵ of claiming historical correctness. Since this historical data is the proof of his whole argument, and if disproven would undermine his whole "apostleship" and therefore his "gospel," we can be sure that the

¹⁶⁴Knox, Chapters in a Life of Paul, pp. 30-34.

¹⁶⁵Gal. 2:20.

limited information he gives is historically correct, and since his are the earliest writings in the New Testament and could be disputed or confirmed by his contemporaries, we shall use his writings as the starting point in our study of the kerygmatic element in the life of Paul.

Romans 7.—To understand the significance of the kerygmatic element in Paul's life, we must appreciate the struggle that Paul was facing. Romans 7 is a good place to begin. The section¹⁶⁶ presents two vital problems: Is Paul describing his own experience here, and, if so, is this experience pre-conversion or post-conversion? Undoubtably, the first question must be answered affirmatively. It describes his own experience. Granted that Paul here is presenting an allegorical interpretation of the story of the fall of Adam in Genesis 3, he does so just because the old story fitted his own experience. He uses the first person "I" in this section, and such a scholar as Dodd concludes that "Paul rarely, if ever, says 'I' unless he is really speaking of himself personally, even if he

¹⁶⁶Rom. 7:14-25.

means to generalize from the particular instance."¹⁶⁷

The second question is the more debatable one. To what period of Paul's life does this experience refer? Either it refers to Paul's condition at the time of writing (and therefore it could be the condition of any Christian, a picture of the Christian's life), or it refers to his state prior to his conversion near Damascus. Both answers have been given throughout the history of the church, and scholars still do not agree how it should be answered.

Augustine, partly due to his struggle with Pelagius, thought Paul was referring to his Christian life.

Luther and the reformers generally agreed. Pietists, in general, reject this interpretation, because their convictions about the Christian life hold that this could only apply to the unconverted.

Dodd is one who concludes that Paul is here discussing his pre-conversion life, his condition prior to the momentous beginning of his Christian career. Paul had previously recognized the ideal presented in the law, and he assented to it with his mind, his reason, and his spiritual part. But, his flesh revolted against it because it was caught in the thralldom of sin.

¹⁶⁷C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 107.

Man is born with instincts that are tainted, that are racial, not individual, that morally are indifferent, that are servants of some alien power over which man cannot rule. But, following his conversion, Dodd is sure that Paul feels that he is beyond all of that:

It would stultify his whole argument if he now confessed that, at the moment of writing, he was a miserable wretch, a prisoner to sin's law. He would have thought it quite abnormal that any Christian should feel so, and there is nothing in his own confessions elsewhere to lead us to suppose that, with all his sense of struggle and insecurity, he ever had such an experience. We conclude that Paul is clinching his argument by the undeniable evidence of his own experience that he was once dead in trespasses and sins, but has now found life and liberty.¹⁶⁸

As Paul, in his vivid description, recalls his condition in the past, he is overcome with the poignant emotions of his despair; "Miserable wretch that I am, Who will rescue me from this body of death?" With equal vividness he feels over again the emotions of his deliverance: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹⁶⁹

Dodd is not alone in this conclusion. Bultmann says, "It is fundamentally the status of man under the law which is characterized here, and that as it is seen through the eyes of one whom Christ has freed from the law."¹⁷⁰ Brunner, because he thinks of this as a description of man's pre-Christian life under the law,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁷⁰ Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1944), p. 287.

interpretes the whole seventh chapter as an interruption, a foreign element, in the section 5-8 dealing with the Christian life.

Nygren comes to the opposite conclusion:

The result, then, is that Chapter 7:14-25 does not refer to the pre-Christian life. Like the rest of Chapters 5-8, Chapter 7 treats of the Christian life.¹⁷¹

Nygren, however, does not think that this is a description of division and discord in the soul:

What Paul laments is not that the will simultaneously desires something else, but that the will is not effected in corresponding action. It is only on the basis of the fact that the will is singly directed to the good that he can say that he "delights in the law of God." Only because he would not do evil, but hates it, can Paul say, "It is no longer I that do it."¹⁷²

Nygren feels that against any statement that man affirms, desires, and wills the good, and yet at the same time the same man does not will the good and, therefore, does not do it, stands Paul's statement, "I do not the good that I want, but the evil that I do not want is what I do."¹⁷³

Nygren does say that Paul has a duality in the Christian life, but he insists that it is not a divided will or discord in the soul. It is the duality between

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 292.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 291.

¹⁷³Rom. 7:19.

will and action, between intention and performance. This duality or tension is the expression of the Christian's status as a participant in two aeons, the "old" and the "new." Thus, in Chapter 6 he is "free for sin" and yet sin has not vanished from his life, because he still lives "in the flesh." He is both a member "in Christ" and a member "in Adam." Only when the new aeon comes to consummation will there be no tension between will and performance.

The point is important for Paul, Nygren says, for Paul is pointing out that the Gospel is not to enable us to gain our own righteousness through the law. No, for the Gospel of Christ is the very righteousness of God for us. Even for the Christian, the law is impotent to bring righteousness, for although we belong to Christ in the new aeon, we still live in the old aeon, "in the flesh." Therefore, just as in Chapter 6 we see that we are free from sin--yet we long for the redemption of our bodies, just so in Chapter 7 we see that we are free from the law--yet we are not righteous according to its criterion.

Only if we heed both sides of such facts can we give a true picture of the Christian life; for it is conditioned by the fact that the Christian belongs at the same time to both the new and the old

aeons.¹⁷⁴

Paul describes the actual situation of the Christian as it is in the midst of the present aeon. The Christian--in this present world: there we face the dualism and the tension in the Christian's status. As a Christian he belongs to Christ and lives his life "in Christ;" but as one who belongs to the old aeon he still lives "in the flesh."¹⁷⁵

A third position different from either Dodd or Nygren is that of Karl Barth.

"Wretched man that I am." We must not deprive this "am" of its heavy significance. Paul is not describing the situation before his conversion. Paul describes his past, present, and future existence. He portrays a situation as real after the episode on the road to Damascus as before it.¹⁷⁶

However much we may wish to do away with this dualism, Barth insists, religion presents man as two halves. One half is the "spirit" of the inward man, which delights in the law of God; the other half is the natural world of the members. These two war against each other. Man cannot be identified with either of these two natures: to try to synthesize these two natures of man, which are antithetical to each other, with any kind of monism, is untrue to both religion and the facts. Therefore, this section in Romans is descriptive of

¹⁷⁴Nygren, op. cit., p. 296.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 295.

¹⁷⁶Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 270.

Paul's pre-conversion as well as his post-conversion life. Basically, it is descriptive of his present moment of life, the "existential" moment.

We have seen the three extremes of interpretation of Romans 7. Dodd says the account is wholly about his pre-conversion state. Nygren says that Romans is wholly about his post-conversion life, his Christian life, the struggle as part of the two aeons. Barth says that Romans 7 is about all of life, because all of life is lived in the existential moment when we know ourselves people of the spirit and also natural people of the flesh. Which interpretation are we to maintain?

Each viewpoint has something to say that is true. Dodd makes a good point for helping us to explain Paul's state prior to his conversion in such a way that the conversion experience adequately accounts for his change of orientation. Nygren seems to be most correct about the nature of the Christian's life. And Barth is quite correct in maintaining that conversion doesn't basically change the nature of man; it still leaves him a finite creature caught in the middle of the life-affirming and life-denying struggle.

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Paul's pre-conversion struggle.—Paul undoubtedly thought of his conversion as happening at that moment near Damascus. But this conversion had been in the process of preparation for a long time. For years the dominating note of Paul's inner life had been one of utter failure and frustration. One of the causes of this frustration was the diversity of Paul's training, due to his being born in one of the world's great transition eras. Paul was in the middle of Jewish, Greek, and Roman influences that he had to integrate.

Paul was probably brought up in a strict Jewish home; circumcised on the eighth day, began reading the Scriptures at five, the Mishnah at ten, and subject to the law at thirteen, according to the custom. But Paul also was probably a Roman citizen. Finally, he was close to Greek influences, reading and speaking Greek familiarly. Trying to live with each of these diverse cultural backgrounds was part of Paul's difficulty. But on top of this confusion there was the added impact of the Christian witness, and it was this that brought Paul's system of organization to the crisis.

If there was one thing that Paul inherited from Judaism, it was his desire for righteousness. Religion was the quest of righteousness. And righteousness came by the law. Utterly convinced of the divine and final

character of the revelation of God as contained in the law, he persistently devoted himself to the task of obeying it in order to obtain to what he calls "righteousness." And Paul, according to his own testimony,¹⁷⁷ was successful in obtaining a high degree of perfection of righteousness. We cannot say that it was in the midst of the bankruptcy of his Pharisaic legalism in which Christ came to rescue him. But this was just the trouble; although he had obtained a degree of righteousness greater than most around him (and we cannot doubt this, on the evidence of his later life), he found no satisfaction in this.

Paul could later in his life attribute this to the inability of legalism to produce peace in the soul. The righteousness he was trying to achieve was based on "negatives." "Thou shalt not" was the basic command. His positive efforts were efforts to appease God. This legalism ended in its own self-defeat, for the repressed thought or desire did not die, but merely took refuge in the unconscious where it continued to influence his every thought. Paul's intense certainty is itself the best indication that he was fighting desperately to convince himself that the threatening uncertainties

¹⁷⁷Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:6.

were untrue. But Paul was showing growing dissatisfaction with efforts to save himself by his own efforts. His resources were not sufficient for the job of salvation; this conclusion was really inherent in the Jewish conception of religion, as evidenced by both the law and the prophets, Paul was later to testify. Paul was bargaining with God, offering his puny efforts in return for God's blessing. And Paul was gradually realizing what every sincerely religious person has always come to see, that if God were to mark iniquity, not one man could stand. Paul came to understand that failure under the law was not due to any personal shortcoming, but to the utter intrinsic impossibility of achieving righteousness by only human effort. Until he was convinced of this absolute impossibility he was not ready to see God in a new light; and once he did realize the nature of his ethical strivings, a view of God far different was at hand. The pre-conversion struggle was the period of dawning of this insight; the conversion experience was the actual awareness of it; and all Paul's later work was an implication of this insight of faith.

Another source of conflict for Paul was the question of the Messiah. There can be no reasonable doubt that Paul had thoughts of a Messiah, who was a

high spiritual being who would come in power and great glory, probably over-throwing the foreign Roman rule. His deepest longing must have been that God would send his anointed Messiah. As a good rigorous Pharisee he undoubtedly wished that the Christian sect was right and that God had sent his Messiah--surely now was the time that the world needed him. The moment that Saul was convinced by his personal experience that the Messiah had come, his conversion was accomplished.

But Paul could not believe that this had happened. What horrified him was that the Christians said this Messiah had been crucified. This negated all his hopes and beliefs, for the Scriptures taught him "cursed be he that is hanged on a tree."¹⁷⁸ Paul could not reconcile this view of the Messiah with the Law, which he felt not only to be just, holy, and good, but the Torah, the way to achieve the righteousness demanded by God. One contradicted the other; hence his passionate hostility and determination to extinguish the Christian sect. But his feverish activity neither brought him inner peace and satisfaction, nor convinced the erroneous Christians of their error.

This brave stand of the Christians against

¹⁷⁸Deut. 21:23.

persecution shook Paul's confidence. Especially can this be seen in Paul's dealings with Stephen. The historicity of the event does not concern us here. The artistry of Luke's account in Acts indicates the conflict going on in the learned, ethically righteous, Pharisaic Paul. Stephen challenged Paul's religious condition, saying that the exclusiveness and cruel haughtiness of the Jewish leaders was in direct opposition to God and His Holy Spirit. This accusation perfectly agreed with Paul's own estimate of his own condition.

There is no doubt about the fact that Paul persecuted the Christians prior to his conversion. Paul himself often refers to this fact. But why did he persecute them? Other Jews tolerated them. Many answers have been given, such as that these later Christians were making more inclusive claims than earlier Christians, or that Paul was a more sensitive soul than others, or that he saw the implications of their claims better than others. Perhaps these are true, but the important point is that Paul saw the Christians' claims as the destroyer of Torah. And Paul, long before he was a Christian, had assumed for himself the role of the prophet of God, the true exponent of the faith.

Paul's conversion experience was not his first call to be the voice of God; for Paul was the voice and punishing hand of God long before his conversion. His call was not to be a prophet or spokesman for God; he was that already. But it was a call to shift his message; not Torah but Christ is the way. He was no more vigorous for God after the conversion than before; but the implications of his insight gained at Damascus was that an appeal to faith in an active-redeeming God, not an obedience-demanding God, was his message.

Boisen¹⁷⁹ has noted that Paul was a member of a minority group which was striving to maintain its racial integrity against the onslaughts of a dominant surrounding culture. But the Christians were doing away with much that was distinctive to that minority culture and its nationalistic hopes. Furthermore, Paul was bothered in keeping his instinctual drives, the "flesh" as he calls it, under control. The Christians were a sore point in this battle, too, for they made him uncomfortable by what they said about outward righteousness and over-emphasis on trivialities of the law while neglecting its weightier matters. Paul's integrity

¹⁷⁹A. T. Boisen, The Exploration of the Inner World (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 78.

pushed him into trying to exterminate the Christians; but his sensitiveness to truth and the desire to do the will of God, as he had so thoroughly learned from his Judaism, would not permit him to live comfortably with this action. Men never do wrong so completely and so merrily as when moved by conscience; but at the same time it is true that a sensitive conscience finds no ~~satisfaction~~ in what is inconsistent with its basic tenets. And Paul was a sensitive soul, dedicated entirely to doing God's will. Living in this untenable situation, some kind of change was inevitable.

Paul's conversion experience.--We know little of the details surrounding Paul's conversion experience. Paul's testimony is that "He was pleased to reveal His Son to (in) me,"¹⁸⁰ and "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?"¹⁸¹ The physical descriptions usually associated with the conversion are largely from the Acts account, and are not validated in Paul's epistles. Paul is only insistent upon the reality of the inner experience: "For it is God who said 'let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of

¹⁸⁰ Gal. 1:15.

¹⁸¹ I Cor. 9:1.

the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."¹⁸² But the allusion to the Genesis creation account being likened unto what God has created in his own heart in the "light" seen in the "face of Christ" is undoubtedly a reference to his own conversion experience.

If Paul's experience was an inner event rather than the observance of an external phenomena, does this mean that it was not "real," or "valid"? Most assuredly it was a valid experience. Conversion is largely the work of the unconscious, which has the ability to activate itself whenever consciousness makes it necessary. Whenever the conscious fosters a one-sided attitude toward life, such as Paul was doing prior to his conversion, a psychic situation comes about which causes the unconscious to function in a compensatory manner. This creates a new attitude, which emerges into consciousness suddenly, but which has been prepared for some time in the unconscious.

The unconscious sets about preparing a new attitude which is then released at a certain moment and transforms consciousness. The individual experiences this as a complete transformation

¹⁸²II Cor. 4:6.

of personality, all the more startling since it all happens in a moment.¹⁸³

The inspiration for this experience has the quality of coming from outside the known self, but can also be explained as coming from within. Whatever revelation occurs is actually an opening of the depths of the soul, a psychological experience. Scientifically, this is all that can be said; but that does not mean that revelation is not much more than this alone. What lays at the bottom of this process, whether God or other forces, science can not say, for it lays outside the bonds of science to conjecture. Paul undoubtedly experienced inwardly a profound presence, which he was certain was none other than the Lord, Jesus whom he had been persecuting.

George Coe says that the converted person usually has some thoughts like these: "All is well; I have nothing to fear; I am part of a system that is good."¹⁸⁴ And this expresses well the experience of Paul. Paul, struggling to find his righteousness, to find peace in his heart, to overcome the intolerable feeling that he

¹⁸³Hans Schaer, Religion and the Cure of Souls in Jung's Psychology (London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1951), p. 65.

¹⁸⁴George Coe, Psychology of Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), chap. 10.

was not what he should be, suddenly found the answer to all his hopes, while journeying to Damascus. In that moment Paul found that he could accept himself, because he had experienced the grace of God, which was that while he was yet the unrighteous man that he was, still sinner, even the persecutor of the church, he was accepted by the very Lord he was denying. This experience was the turning point in his life, and was to influence every thought he was ever to think, and to write.

Implications of Paul's conversion.--The conversion of Paul meant to him many things. First of all it meant that the condemned criminal whose followers he was persecuting was none other than God's Messiah. The central constituent in the experience which culminated near Damascus was an intellectual apprehension or conviction about Jesus of Nazareth. And yet the relation between the Christ he experienced near Damascus and who became a constant presence within him, to the human of Nazareth called Jesus, Paul nowhere completely discusses. He resolves that he shall not know Jesus after the flesh anymore, and surely he seldom refers to the earthly life of our Lord. What is essential is the Christ, the risen Lord, who had come into his life

and given him new hope. But this Christ can never be dis-associated from Jesus the man. "God chose to reveal His Son to me,"¹⁸⁵ implies that God had opened Paul's eyes to see Jesus in His true character. Jesus was not only teacher, nor, despite His crucifixion, an accursed blasphemer; rather He was the one whom God acknowledged as His Son.

The conversion of Paul also meant to him that everything about his faith and experience was directly from God; man was not involved in it in any way. He claimed his gospel was not man's gospel, but came directly through this conversion experience as a revelation of Jesus Christ. It is at this point that Acts and Paul's epistles differ most. Acts indicates his dependence upon Ananias especially, and on others at Damascus and Jerusalem. But Galations insists that he did not confer with flesh and blood: it was of God. Only in Galations do we hear of Arabia; and Paul's purpose here is to show his independence of others. Undoubtedly, overwhelmed by this tremendous event, he withdrew in solitude to "think through" what had happened to him, to integrate his new shattering concept of God's righteousness into his total orientation.

¹⁸⁵Gal. 1:16.

Upon his return he was ready to proclaim his gospel, as directly commissioned by Jesus Christ, as surely as the other Apostles.

Just as Paul interpretes his apostleship as resulting from his conversion, so also is the call to preach it to the Gentiles. Paul does not directly say that he was sent to the Gentiles at the moment that Jesus appeared to him. Acts states that the voice said to go and preach to the Gentiles, but this detail of Acts could be a means of attributing Paul's work among the Gentiles to God, in line with the author's purposes. But, there is no question that Paul always thought of the call and commission as both inherently involved in the Lord's appearance to him.

The conversion then meant to Paul that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he was sent as an Apostle. But what was the gospel with which he was sent? What did it mean that Jesus was the Messiah and that Paul was an Apostle? Here is where we see the dynamic of the conversion experience. The gospel he preached was that "While we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." "He is our Peace." "Where sin did abound, grace did much more abound." But why did Paul say this? What was the basis of his statements?

He says them because they describe the most overwhelming and determining experience of his life. In the picture of Jesus as the Christ, which appeared to him at the moment of his greatest separation from other men, from himself and God, he found himself accepted in spite of his being rejected. And when he found that he was accepted, he was able to accept himself and to be reconciled to others. The moment in which grace struck him and overwhelmed him, he was reunited with that to which he belonged, and from which he was estranged in utter strangeness.¹⁸⁶

The whole thought of Paul, as seen in his writings, was a result of the overwhelming experience of grace, grace undeserved, grace unearned, grace as a gift of God.

It was the experience of grace that forced Paul to preach a gospel different from many others who called themselves Christians. To be a Christian was something entirely different than anything else he had been; it was not an addition to an old life, it was a resurrection from being dead; it was a new man in place of an old man. Thus, in spite of the fact that he still considered the law holy, just, and good, he considered it completely inadequate to enable one to experience the grace that he knew.

The Jerusalem disciples had grafted on what they had learned from Jesus, and their sentiments and reflections in relation to the risen Lord, onto the Judaism in which they had been nurtured. Their religious lives had been enriched and changed, but

¹⁸⁶Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 162.

without discontinuity.¹⁸⁷

Nock is correct in saying that this was not so for Paul; it was not some new ideas grafted on, but a whole new life which he now lived in Jesus Christ.

Reconciliation of the estranged, and emancipation of the enslaved, are the cardinal points of Paul's gospel. This is because they are active words, actually describing the process of a slave obtaining his freedom, or the reuniting of persons who are estranged; and Paul had experienced this process.

Dodd has described Paul's eschatology as both "futuristic" and "realized." By this he means a "Christ-mysticism," in which those who are in Christ are possessed by the Holy Spirit, which is the presence of the Lord. We are already created as the glorious body because we are "in" Christ now; and this is true for Paul because he has experienced the grace of God. In so far as Paul has an ethical program, it is this concept of being "in" Christ. Because grace is active now in the lives of saints, the foundation has been laid for a strong, positive, constructive social ethic. But again, ethics are the fruit of the grace of God, which has been experienced in the experience of grace.

¹⁸⁷A. D. Nock, St. Paul (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938), p. 67.

The term "mysticism" can be misleading when used of Paul. Schweitzer has pointed out that Paul never assumes the deification of man, which is what Hellenism means by mysticism.¹⁸⁸ Paul speaks only of a fellowship with God; and this is the work of Christ. Prior to our experience of grace, we are separate from God. But, after experiencing grace, we are "in Christ" and, therefore, reunited with God. Sonship is not natural to man, nor is it possible apart from mediation by a mystical union with Christ. When one has experienced grace, when he is "in Christ," he has died and risen with Christ, and thus free from sin and the law. For Paul, this is not a carefully thought-out theological system; it is his interpretation of what has happened to him.

It is not too much to claim that what happened near Damascus changed all of Paul's life. It is true that the conversion experience must be seen as on a continuum with his prior life, but it was in that experience that Paul discovered a new concept of God and his righteousness. Righteousness was not something demanded, but something given. Once overwhelmed by the experience of grace, which was being accepted by God

¹⁸⁸ Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931).

even while being his enemy, he could not help but have faith as an energetic laborer for the Christ that dwelled within him. The following words of Schweitzer, which conclude his study of the historical quest for Jesus, are applicable to Paul as he was led to experience and interpret his experience of grace:

Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through out time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery.

The truth is, it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world.

The abiding and eternal in Jesus is absolutely independent of historical knowledge and can only be understood by contact with His spirit which is still at work in the world. In proportion as we have the Spirit of Jesus we have the true knowledge of Jesus.¹⁸⁹

Conclusion.—Paul and his writings will always be especially important for the Christian Church. This means that he is especially important to Christian educators preparing programs of Christian education. Such programs must take into account the thoughts of Paul and his writings. That Paul's writings are

¹⁸⁹Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), pp. 397-99.

incorporated into the basic Christian literature means that Paul's understanding of Christian faith must be dealt with if one claims to be truly Christian. Programs which conceive of the Christian faith as being a set of propositional truths which are to be intellectually understood and accepted, or a standard of ethical principles which demand conformity, or a system of enabling individuals to gain a self-achieved status, are automatically to be rejected.

Paul witnesses to the fact that Christian faith is all the work of God. If one comes to Christian maturity, it is because God gives his gifts. God accepts man, even though man is unworthy, and gives peace and joy. God has acted effectively and specifically in he who is called Christ to redeem man, and outside Christ one does not know of God's saving action. Those who know of this essential action of God are those who find themselves accepted and participants in a new community, the fellowship of the spirit, the church. Therefore, participation in the church is not so much a "requirement" for salvation, but the "testimony" of the salvation which he has given in personal relationship, the relationship of a person with his loving redeeming God and with the glorious reigning Lord. Only this relationship matters. Once such a

relationship exists and is affirmed in accepting faith, ethical conduct results as surely as a living man breathes. The manner in which one expresses his faith is relatively unimportant, because it is only the experiential knowledge of the risen and living Lord which matters, and it is that which insures the proper confession of faith, participation in the body of Christ, and actions which give God glory.

The kerygmatic element in Paul's thought was not simply the preaching of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus who was the Christ. It was that Paul, who was estranged from God and enslaved in human inability to help himself, had experienced the liberating power of the present living reigning Lord of life, Christ, who had overcome the estrangement and enslavement of life and death through the power of God in the resurrection. The kerygmatic element was not a static concept of a past event; it was a dynamic involvement in a present community of the spirit under the Lordship of one who could claim rightly that position in view of his own victory. The kerygmatic element for Paul was the rule of the present Lord of Life, the revealer of the ever-loving and redeeming God, the ever-graceful Holy One who makes himself known in the presently reigning Christ, who was remembered as having lived as

Jesus of Nazareth and crucified, and who will eventually fully establish his Lordship over all powers. But past and future both gain significance from the present reality of having been incorporated by the power of God into his fellowship.

Therefore, only that kind of Christian education which leads to an experiential knowledge of acceptance and grace is ultimately important. Only that which teaches of the loving will of God as seen in the crucified and risen Christ is sufficient. Only that which is the outgrowth of the fellowship's witness can really be Christian education. Only the life that is responding to God in love and obedience and thanks because of what God has done and is doing, can really claim to be Christian. Methods, and to some extent content, may change, but the only program of Christian education which has any meaning is that which brings one under the influence of a witnessing fellowship so strongly that one experiences the complete claim of Christ and accepts the accepting love of Christ through that fellowship. No program is Christian that does not lead one to a joyous acceptance of the acceptance and love of God in Christ.

Conclusion

Our initial statement was that a program of Christian education must take its cue from the church's self-concept and message. Only after knowing what the church has in mind for those who participate in it, can the insights of educational practices be utilized.

The kerygma, the content of early Christian preaching, was that in the historical event of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God had decisively entered into human history to bring about the decisive act in the salvation process. The early church believed that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the way of salvation had been shown, the new-age had begun, and the Spirit was presently at work within the community of believers, which they called the church. It then proclaimed this gospel message to all those who would repent, believe in it, and participate in this community. The implications it drew from its preaching were spelled out in its ethics of love, in its understanding of the scriptures of old, and its future expectations. But the kerygma was basically a proclamation of what God had done to decisively enable man to participate in the kingdom of God as a present reality.

In the confessions of faith this kerygma was reflected in the all-inclusive confession of the Christians that "Christ is the Lord." Such a confession had implications touching every part of life. It meant that the one God of Israel, who had spoken in the law and prophets, had now fulfilled the law and prophets in the coming of the Messiah, the Christ, among men. It declared that one who had lived among them, Jesus of Nazareth, by virtue of his resurrection and exaltation into a reigning, present Lordship, had been declared by God to be that Christ. In the light of his present Lordship, they could look back upon his life and recall his words, teachings, and deeds, and see in them the eternal significance which they declared was evidence of one born of David, the Son of God. But this faith in the divine origination and character of Jesus was a conclusion drawn from the present exalted Lordship of the Risen Christ. Likewise, the church declared that the Christ would again appear to men, as he had previously, in agreement with the eschatological thinking of the day. But this confidence and enthusiasm they showed for the expected return of Christ was engendered wholly by the certainty that he already appeared among them, that his kingdom had already been established, that the Spirit was now among

men, and, therefore, its fulfillment in his complete return was merely a matter of time. For in his present Lordship, all that had been expected was evidenced. The blind could see, the lame could walk, the hungry were fed, sin was forgiven, the new age had dawned, the kingdom had come, that which was expected had already begun to appear among them and had been partially fulfilled already. Therefore, to confess that this kerygma had been fulfilled, that Christ was Lord, was to declare something about the church itself. For the church was that community of people who participated in this new era, who had received the Spirit, who witnessed the fruit of the Spirit, and, therefore, those who were to participate in this church were those who found themselves under the power of the Spirit, knew themselves forgiven, experienced the love which God had shown through the fellowship of love, participated already in the new creation.

This church had not carefully thought out its doctrine, but it was living experientially with the power of love in their midst. Daily they were influenced by the power of the Spirit, and those who came within the sphere of this community of believers witnessed to the fact that they too evidenced that power, for within the life of this community they experienced

hope, faith, forgiveness, love, and trust which were attributable to God and to Christ and to the Spirit.

Baptism was a water-act, handled by this community of believers, who through their life in the Spirit actually did convey the grace of God to those who shared it. Baptism was not a theoretical declaration that God would do something, but rather a reality-act, in which people experienced that they were accepted within the grace of God because they experienced that they were accepted within his body, the church. Such baptism had absolutely no meaning apart from the faith and certainty that Christ was present, available, ruling the heavens and the earth, and that he had sent his Spirit to dwell among them.

It remains our task to show the implications of this faith of the early church as evidenced in kerygma, confessions of faith, and initiatory rites, for a program of Christian education. But all the implications that we might draw are derived from these facts: God has acted decisively for the redemption of mankind; Christ is the present, living, reigning Lord of all life so that all of life has significance; and in the rites of initiation into the life of the church one participates in the power of the Holy Spirit who acts in and among the community of those sharing in the

Lordship of Christ, the power of life in the Spirit. Apart from such a certainty of faith, the certainty of a decisive act of God, the certainty of the Lordship of Christ, the certainty of the fellowship of those living in the Spirit, there can be no Christian faith, and there certainly would be nothing Christian about any program of Christian education. But where the Gospel of what God has decisively done is preached, and confidence in Christ's present Lordship is shared by the congregation who have experienced participation in the redemptive, loving fellowship, the church, there Christian education has a specific task and can utilize the insights of the educational discipline to promote its distinctive task.

CHAPTER III

A STUDY OF THE KERYGMATIC ELEMENT AS DEVELOPED THROUGHOUT THE YEARS IN THE CHURCH

Introduction

We have made an historical study of the kerygmatic element as evidenced in the early church. The New Testament reflects the growing church and the developing faith during the first decades of the Christian faith. A good part of it was written by forty to seventy or more years after the events about which they speak. Particularly in the Pastorals do we see evidences of the administrative and educational life of the church. Likewise, in the Gospels themselves we see reflections of the problems and life of the church in these following decades. In the Acts we have already noted some of the specific purposes the author had in mind for educating the church.

In this section we are primarily interested in the educational developments of the kerygmatic element within the church following the early decades, but outside the scriptures. Time and space has limited the survey to a representative few of the many possible choices. Although an attempt has been made to select those writings which are most relevant for our survey,

there is some arbitrariness in the selections. The *Doctrina*, *Didache*, and the earlier Clement are among the earliest writings. Justin Martyr and Tertullian are only two representatives of the second century. Cyril of Jerusalem has left us the first complete course of instruction for catechumens and has been selected from the fourth century. The middle ages lead us up to Luther's reformation insights, which culminate our historical study of the developments in Christian education relating to the kerygmatic element.

The Early Writings

The Doctrina.--The majority of Christians were syncretistic in their allegiance to the Christian faith. They gave their loyalty to the living faith as known to Paul and John, but in practice had many legalistic ideas familiar to some aspects of Judaism and paganism. Many of these early adherents of Christianity thought of it as a moral code which embraced and surpassed that of the Torah.¹ Such people felt that it was necessary to have a set of rules of conduct for the Christian's practical moral obligations so that new converts to this faith could have more definite instruction. Such

¹K. S. Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 121.

a document was actually composed for Christian use, and has been referred to as "The Two Ways," or as Goodspeed² calls it, the "Doctrina" or "Teaching of the Apostles."

Until recently the manuscripts we have of the Two Ways were thought to be translations of the Didache, but it now seems certain that this little writing circulated prior to the Didache. It contains, or at least reflects, some of the ethical teachings given to Jewish proselytes during the New Testament times,³ and perhaps even prior to the writing of the epistles and Gospels.⁴ We know from the Book of Acts⁵ that the Christians were early called people of "The Way." Whether this Way was predominately doctrinal or ethical is debatable, but from our considerations of the early kerygma and confessions of faith we are inclined to conclude that both were involved. "Christ is Lord" is a doctrinal statement, but it is an experiential expression of "present Lordship" which furnishes ground for the fruit of the

²E. J. Goodspeed, The Apostolic Fathers (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 1.

³C. C. Richardson (ed.), Early Christian Fathers (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 162.

⁴L. J. Sherrill, The Rise of Christian Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), p. 149.

⁵Acts 9:2.

spirit, the new ethical life.

The Two Ways, however, surely does not reflect the bold assertion of the all-sufficiency of faith, but instead transmits the old legalism over to the new religion. "There are two ways in the world, that of life and that of death, of light and of darkness."⁶ It first describes the way of life, but even this way is described in some seventy commands, predominantly negative and prohibitive. "You shall not commit murder, adultery . . . you shall hate nobody," and so forth. The way of death is then listed in some forty characteristic ways. . . . "It is bad, full of curses, adulteries, murders, base desires," and so forth.

Abstain, my son, from all these things, and see that no one leads you astray from this Teaching; otherwise, you will be taught outside the true religion. If you do these things daily with reflection, you will be near the living God, but if you do not do them, you will be far from the truth.⁷

It appears that a Jewish code of ethical instruction was incorporated as a whole, and then in an attempt to adapt it to Christian use, a Christian benediction was added at the end:

Lay up all these things in your mind, and you will

⁶Goodspeed, op. cit., Doctrina 1:1.

⁷Acts 6:1-2.

not be disappointed in your hope, but through these sacred contests you will attain the crown, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who reigns and rules with God the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.⁸

But even in the benediction the impact of keeping these regulations as "sacred contests" is greater than the significance of "our Lord Jesus Christ, who reigns and rules."

From our study of the Two Ways we must conclude that the reduction of the Christian faith to a higher order of ethical instructions was common in the life of the early church. Surely this does not represent the total of instruction given to Christians, especially new converts. Dodd says that it is improper to conclude that the church represented by this little book was not interested in other aspects than the ethical instruction, for it only claims to be "didache," not "kerygma." If it had any purpose further than moral instruction, it would have had a different name. If it had as its purpose the proclamation of its faith, which some writings have, then it would have some title as "The Preaching of the Apostles."⁹ But the distinction between the preaching and teaching function in Dodd is

⁸Acts 6:3.

⁹Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, p. 7.

too precise, as we have shown elsewhere, and therefore our conclusion is that the document does reflect a church lacking in evangelical insight. The fact that such instruction is given with so little interpretation in specifically Christian terms leaves us with the impression that such interpretation was often not given. The kerygmatic element was not of enough importance to manifest itself among those who were responsible for the Two Ways. That the Two Ways was quoted almost intact in later writings [the Didache, and Apostolic Church Orders of the third century] indicates that the later church was ready to accept its legalistic view without too much criticism.

The Didache.—Prior to the time the churches had a canonized New Testament and a systematized church order, the need was felt for some kind of manual of instruction in the rites and practices of the church. The Didache is such a book.

The characteristic dating for the book is about the year A.D. 100, although Goodspeed¹⁰ dates it as late as the middle of the second century. Streeter is certain that it must have been written prior to A.D. 110,

¹⁰Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 9.

and more likely as early as A.D. 90.¹¹

The Didache also gives a legalistic code in a typical Jewish view: "You shall not withhold your hand from your son or daughter, but from their youth up you shall teach them the fear of God,"¹² and adds an understanding note, "For if you can bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect; but if you cannot, do what you can." In considering the sacraments, prayer, and fasting, he devotes himself to the externals of each. However, even these superficial aspects of the faith and the incorporated version of the Two Ways are transcended by deep insight of a kerygmatic nature:

After you are satisfied (in the Eucharist), give thanks thus: "We give you thanks, Holy Father, for your holy name, which you have made dwelt in our hearts, and for knowledge and faith and immortality, which you have made known to us through Jesus your servant; glory to you forever. You, almighty Master, have created all things for your name's sake, you have given men food and drink to enjoy, that they may give you thanks, but you have granted up spiritual food and drink and everlasting life through your servant."¹³

Since the Didache purports to be a church manual for guiding the Christian congregation in its worship

¹¹B. H. Streeter, The Primitive Church (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), p. 294.

¹²Goodspeed, op. cit., Didache 4:9.

¹³Ibid., 10:2-4.

and discipline and in instructing converts, it must be taken as characteristic of some of the teaching being used at that time. Especially is this true, since the sub-heading says: "The teaching of the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles (Heathen)." Assuredly, it owes nothing to direct Apostolic composition, but the very fact that the church accepted and kept the title indicates that the church gave it the value of the apostolic. And "to the Gentiles" suggests that this was the apostolically approved content of instruction for new converts. But the date of writing suggests that such instruction may have been disputed among churchmen at that time. If Paul's writings were gathered and distributed as a unit about A.D. 95¹⁴ or shortly before this,¹⁵ then the Didache may be viewed as a reaction toward this radical view of the all-sufficiency of faith. We have already seen that the Acts was probably such a reaction of a writer with more Judaistic leanings, or more conservative, static concepts of Christianity. Written at about the same time as the highly spiritualized Gospel of John, the Didache may be an attempt to make the Gospel more understandable to the common laity and practical in the

¹⁴Knox, Chapters in the Life of Paul, p. 18.

¹⁵Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 3.

daily needs of the church.

If the Didache is seen complete in itself as characteristic of the instruction received by new converts, then it appears as inadequate in conveying the dynamic faith of the early church. But if we can assume that the new convert also had access to the Pauline epistles, and that the life of the congregations were full of charismatic influence, in which the Holy Spirit was experienced as a common possession to those of faith, then the Didache was surely a sufficient and practical guide for instructing the new convert. Undoubtedly the Didache was not always used in such a living community, so that "Christ is Lord" was an article of faith to be believed and ethics were a code to be followed. But where "Christ is Lord" was experientially affirmed, the Didache was adequate to the needs of vibrant Christianity.

The first letter of Clement to the Corinthians.--

About A.D. 95 a letter was written from the church in Rome to the church at Corinth seeking to correct the antagonistic attitude of the Corinthians toward their church officers. Ascribed to Clement, it is probably the earliest Christian writing which has come down to us outside the New Testament, with the possible exception

of the Two Ways and the Didache. To the historian the chief interest of this epistle is its concern with order in the church and the checking of spiritual gifts, long a difficulty among the Corinthians.¹⁶

Let us therefore, brethren, campaign most strenuously under his faultless orders. Let us observe those who campaign under our rulers,--with what discipline, subordination, and obedience they execute their orders.¹⁷

The Apostles received the gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus the Christ was sent from God. So Christ is from God, and the apostles from Christ. Both came to pass regularly by the will of God. So having received their instructions, and having been reassured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in the word of God they set forth in the conviction of the Holy Spirit, preaching that the kingdom of God was about to come. So as they preached from country to country and from town to town, they appointed their first converts, after testing them by the Spirit, as superintendents and assistants (or bishops and deacons), of those who were to believe.¹⁸

Few of the Christian documents that were written around the turn of the first century¹⁹ can be understood except in the light of the strong movement toward unification and consolidation in all aspects of the church's

¹⁶II Cor. 10-13.

¹⁷Goodspeed, op. cit., First Letter of Clement 37:1-2.

¹⁸Ibid., 42:1-4.

¹⁹The Pastorals, I Peter, the Johannine Epistles, Hebrews, the Book of Revelations, II Clement, and Polycarp's epistles.

life.²⁰ Under pressure from outside influences, the emphasis upon order and unity was greater than on the kerygmatic elements of faith.

However, even though proper instruction and regular order are his concerns, there is evidence of a dynamic kerygmatic appreciation of the faith:

Let him who in union with Christ has love, keep Christ's commandments. Who is equal to expressing the greatness of its beauty? The height to which love lifts us is inexpressible. Love unites us to God . . . covers up a host of sins . . . bears anything . . . is patient . . . nothing vulgar . . . knows no schism, creates no discord . . . by love God's chosen have been made perfect. Without love nothing can please God. In love the Master took us to himself. Because of the love he had for us, Jesus Christ our Lord by the will of God gave his blood for us, and his flesh for our flesh, and his life for our lives.²¹

The high tone of evangelical truth, the simple appeals which he makes to the heart and conscience, the counsels of love, forgiveness, humility and reconciliation which are derived from Christ's own act, make us think that he knew of the living present Lordship of Christ as experiential fact, and that instruction would follow in keeping with such an understanding.

The fact that the church at that day was fighting for its life against both persecution from without and

²⁰Knox, The Early Church, p. 114.

²¹Goodspeed, op. cit., Clement chap. 49.

doctrines foreign to its faith from within made it inevitable that the church would emphasize Clement's appeal to order and authority instead of his evangelical insight. Undoubtedly, much of the church of his day conceived the faith as propositions to be believed and an ethic to be commanded of its people. But it is inconceivable that Clement would be satisfied with such an educational purpose. To be received into the fellowship of the church was to be "in union with Christ," and ethics result because whoever is "in union with Christ has love." A creed was to be believed, which was objective or historically rooted in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; but the objective was related to the subjective, historical related to the personal: "In love the Master took us to himself . . . his life for our lives, because of the love he had for us."

Justin Martyr.—Among the earliest theological literature, the so-called apologies, is the Apology of Justin Martyr, written about A.D. 155. Well educated and widely traveled, he had sought wisdom through the philosophies of his day. His conversion to Christianity came when he found Christ to be the Logos who had taken individual human-historical form.²² Justin feels free

²²Latourette, op. cit., p. 105.

to take the ancient doctrinal formula and make an addition on his own according to his special conception of the work of Christ as the logos, revealer of truth.²³

Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judaea, in the times of Tiberius Caesar; and that we reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third, we will prove.²⁴

But lest we should seem to be reasoning sophistically, we consider it right, before giving you the promised explanation, to cite a few precepts given by Christ Himself. . . . Brief and concise utterances fell from Him, for He was no sophist, but His word was the power of God. Concerning chastity, He uttered such sentiments as these. . . (and follows many quotes from Jesus).²⁵

Christ is the great revealer of truth, revealed according to the mysteries of the faith. Baptism is an act which has sacramental efficacy to regenerate one. This Baptism is called illumination, so that the regeneration is in terms of intellectual capacity to understand.

As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them.

²³Cullmann, The Earliest Christian Confessions, p. 12.

²⁴Ante-Nicene Fathers, I, 166.

²⁵Ibid., p. 167.

Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated.

And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understanding.²⁶

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled.²⁷

And this food (Lord's Supper) is called among us Thanksgiving (the Eucharist), of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is of the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined.²⁸

In the instruction of new converts we see two developments in the writings of Justin. First, he was inclined to regard Christianity as a philosophy which was better, but not essentially different from that of the Greeks. Truth was to be arrived at by man's rational processes applied to ultimate meanings, and the significance of Christ was to reveal higher truth previously unavailable. Membership in the church required the promise to believe the truth which the church taught and to live accordingly. Secondly, he conceived the sacraments, rites, teachings, and practices of the church as mysteries which conveyed the illumination

²⁶Ibid., p. 183

²⁷Ibid., p. 185.

²⁸Ibid., p. 185.

necessary to understand and appropriate these higher truths.

Justin considers knowledge more than simply intelligence, and belief as conviction as well as assent to the Christian truth. But for Justin participation in the Christian fellowship is primarily orientation in Christian philosophy, and not commitment to the reigning Lord of Life, who is the power within the fellowship making for the new being, and without Whom truth is powerless. He is faced with the tremendous task of making Christianity attractive to thinkers of the second century, to whom "the foolishness of the Gospel" is the stumbling block, and it must be made respectable. He acknowledges that the gospel is thought of as foolishness: "For they proclaim our madness to consist in this, that we give to a crucified man a place, second to the unchangeable and eternal God, the Creator of all," but Justin is convinced that if they will only listen to his apology for the faith, they will find it exceedingly understandable and plain: "For they do not discern the mystery that is herein, to which, as we make it plain to you, we pray you to give heed."²⁹ It is inconceivable to him that the truth of the gospel is

²⁹Ibid., p. 167.

not entirely rationable to one who has sufficient knowledge. Repentance, faith, commitment, the present and living Lord dwelling in His church, these are only ideas to be grasped by the mind, and not to be empirically acknowledged. The kerygmatic nature of Christian faith gives way in Justin's thinking to a rational understanding of Christian truth.

Tertullian.--Tertullian of Carthage writes at the end of the second century, and is concerned with the relationship of Christians to the non-Christian world. Several of his works are written especially for those getting ready for entrance into the faith. Although himself a well read and educated man, he held that reason and philosophy were false guides to truth. The very absurdity of a thing was itself reason for its belief, although the divine foolishness was really wiser than all the reasons and philosophies.

The primitive confession, "Christ is Lord," had become a burning issue by the time of Tertullian. He asks:

Do we believe it lawful for a human oath to be superadded to one divine, for a man to come under promise to another master after Christ?³⁰

³⁰ Ante-Nicene Fathers, III, 94.

This formula, Christ is Lord, which originated in the earliest days of the church to signify the ever present indwelling of the Lord, now has become a term of opposition to the term Caesar is Lord, Kyrios Kaisar. This conflict was already evident at the time of the composition of Acts: "These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, announcing another King, Jesus."³¹

Tertullian describes the baptismal service common to his area:

When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel.³²

The confession of faith made at baptism he ascribed as being traceable to the Lord Himself, although in an expanded form. This Rule of Faith was the foundation of the catechetical instruction preceding baptism,³³ although not restricted to use at baptism.

Tertullian makes a distinction between the dipping in water and the receiving of the Spirit by the

³¹Acts 17:7.

³²Ante-Nicene Fathers, III, 94.

³³Cullmann, The Earliest Christian Confessions, p. 21.

laying on of hands:

Not that in the waters we obtain the Holy Spirit; but in the water, under the angel, we are cleansed, and prepared for the Holy Spirit.³⁴

After this, when we have issued from the font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction.³⁵

In the next place, the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit through benediction.³⁶

For Tertullian all this together is baptism, but the imparting of the Spirit is not through the water but through the laying on of hands. The reason Tertullian places such importance on the laying on of hands could be due to his reading Acts and assuming that the Pauline experience of the Spirit was mediated in every case by the imposition of hands.³⁷ But we have previously shown that such was not the case. The peculiar accounts in Acts results from Acts' specific purpose to promote the view that the missionary spread of the church was controlled by God acting through Jerusalem and the Apostles.

Water-baptism and the laying on of hands had previously been thought of as a whole. But by the third century, subsidiary ceremonies to the rite of initiation began to prepare the way for thinking of baptism as a

³⁴Ante-Nicene Fathers, III, 672.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Lampe, op. cit., p. 79.

preparatory rite to the true baptism-of-the-Spirit at the laying on of hands. Gnostic thinking influenced the church at this point, for it has aspirations of being freed from the commonplace "water-baptism" so as to enjoy a "spiritual-redemption" through the development of a "Spirit-baptism" independent of the "washing-in-water." But even the spiritual redemption needed an outward symbol, so that the external symbol of "laying-on-of-hands"³⁸ was utilized for this "Spirit-baptism." These various baptismal ceremonies were generally conceived as parts of one single rite of initiation until toward the third century, when we see in Tertullian the development of baptism as the sacrament of remission of sins and regeneration, and of confirmation or the laying on of hands as the outward sign of the bestowal of the Spirit.³⁹ Duchesne believes that the division of the ceremony of initiation into three rites--baptism, confirmation, and first communion--toward the end of the second century was due to the increasing numbers of candidates for admission and the need for systematization in preparing them for entrance.⁴⁰

³⁸Also called "outward marking" or "signing of the cross."

³⁹Lampe, op. cit., p. 152.

⁴⁰Mgr. L. Duchesne, Christian Worship, Its Origin and Development (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919), p. 292.

Our conclusion is that the fracturing of the doctrine of the initiatory rite, with its confining of the impartation of the Spirit to certain aspects of it, and the consequent de-emphasis of the centrality of the Lordship of Christ as a present possession within the worshipping and living community of the church, led to static conceptions of faith and practices in education inherently unsuited to the needs of the Christian community. The division within the initiatory rite is itself the best evidence that the kerygmatic element had been nearly lost. Baptism was no longer a reality act of being incorporated within the grace of God through acceptance into a grace-community. It was becoming entirely a symbolical act of what later was to be rationally understood, and for the moment had magical efficacy. The content of the kerygma was still believed, but the kerygmatic element of an experiential involvement in the Lordship of the present Christ was lacking.

Cyril of Jerusalem.—Under the title "Lectures addressed to candidates for baptism during Lent, in the Basilica of the Holy Cross" we have the catechetical lectures of Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, dating about A.D. 347. This is the first complete course of

instruction for catecumens that has come down to us, and therefore is of utmost importance for our study of the kerygmatic element. The lectures consist of an introduction, eighteen lectures for competents, persons preparing to receive baptism, and five lectures for those admitted already to baptism and thus ready to receive instruction in the mysteries.

In the introductory lecture the candidate is prepared for what is to come:

Let thy feet hasten to the Catechisings; receive with earnestness the exercism: whether thou be breathed upon or exorcised, the act is to thee salvation.⁴¹

Attend closely to the Catechisings, and though we should prolong our discourse, let not thy mind be wearied out. For thou art receiving armour against the adverse power, armour against herisies, against Jews, and Samaritans, and Gentiles.⁴²

Let me give thee this charge also. Study our teachings and keep them forever. We are bringing to thee stones, as it were, of knowledge. Thou must hear concerning the Living God, thou must hear of Judgement, must hear of Christ, and of the Resurrection. And many things there are to be discussed in succession, which though now dropped one by one, are afterwards to be presented in harmonious connection.⁴³

When, therefore, the Lecture is delivered, if a Catechumen ask thee what the teachers have said,

⁴¹Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, P. Schaff and H. Wace (ed.) (Grand Rapids, Michigan; W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), VII, 3.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

tell nothing to him that is without. For we deliver to thee a mystery, and a hope of the life to come. Guard the mystery for Him who gives the reward. Let none ever say to thee, What harm to thee, if I also know it? So too the sick ask for wine; but if it be given at a wrong time it causes delirium, and two evils arise; the sick man dies, and the physician is blamed. Thus it is also with the Catechumen, if he hears anything from the believer: both the Catechumen becomes delirious (for he understands not what he had heard, and finds fault with the thing, and scoffs at what is said) and the believer is condemned as a traitor. But thou art now standing on the border: take heed, pray, to tell nothing out; not that the things spoken are not worthy to be told, but because his ear is unworthy to receive. Thou wast once a Catechumen, and I described not what lay before thee, when by experience thou hast learned how high are the matters of our teaching, then thou wilt know that the Catechumens are not worthy to hear them. (To the Readers) These Catechetical Lectures for those who are to be enlightened thou mayest lend to candidates for Baptism, and to believers who are already baptized, to read, but give not at all, neither to Catechumens, nor to any others who are not Christians, as thou shalt answer to the Lord.⁴⁴

From this we learn of the nature of the preparation. Up to this time the hearer had been able to attend religious assemblies, setting in special places, but when the Eucharistic liturgy in the service was reached, the unbeliever and beginning catechumen was dismissed by a deacon loudly repeating 'Go out, ye catechumens, in peace.' The Eucharistic liturgy, or Service of the Faithful, which consisted of the Kiss of Peace and The Communion, was reserved for those

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 3,5.

already baptized and confessing the faith. These mysteries were unavailable to the uninitiated. This practice originated both as a safeguard from pagans who might use the evidence in the persecution of Christians, and because of the belief that only the instructed, baptized and possessor of the Spirit could profit from the tremendous gift and mystery of faith. But it seems probable that this practice also served as a motivation and come-on for the uninitiated, and an in-group sharing of a common-bond which separated the in-group from the world. The implications of such a practice of 'the mysteries' for education ought not to be underestimated.

The lectures themselves were oral instruction giving a rudimentary knowledge of the Christian belief. However, we must not be deceived into thinking that it was only verbal instruction, for the whole process was intimately related to congregational life and practice. Basic instruction was also given regularly in the Missa Catechumenorum, or first part of the service, which consisted of lessons from the Scriptures and sermons of ethical and doctrinal instruction. Gregory of Nyssa, another writer shortly after Cyril's time, shows some profound insight into the psychology of learning which characterized the catechetical practices of the time:

The same method teaching, however, is not suitable for everyone who approaches this word. Rather, must we adapt religious instruction to the diversities of religion. While we keep in view the same objectives in our teaching, we cannot use the same arguments in each case. A man of the Jewish faith has certain presuppositions; a man reared in Hellenism, others. . . . For we must adapt our method of therapy to the form of the disease. . . . We must put forward certain principles and reasonable propositions in each discussion, so that the truth may finally emerge from what is admitted on both sides.⁴⁵

Instruction was about certain concrete acts, baptism and holy communion, which were observable, felt, and participated in by the learner. The acts were highly dramatic in their liturgical form, and participation in the rites meaningfully demanded knowledge of the significance of what they meant. The instruction thus made no sense to the non-believer, the person unsympathetic to what he heard; in fact, it would make him sick because he could not understand it and thus work to his damnation. The faith as a system of belief was understandable only by one participating in the community.

The first eighteen lectures gave the preliminary instruction on baptism, repentance, faith, unity and

⁴⁵Bliss W. Bellinger, "An Historical Study of the Catechumenate in the Early Church with Application to the Modern Adult Catechetical Program," (unpublished Master's thesis, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1956), p. 37.

trinity of God, resurrection and judgment, and was given during the period of lent, leading up to baptism on Easter evening. Following this instruction, the competent was carefully scrutinized before relatives and neighbors in order to ascertain if his conduct was worthy. If he showed the necessary attitude and behavior, he then was baptized, after which he heard the lectures on the Mysteries, or "Lectures addressed to the Baptized in Easter Week in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre." The catechumen was then wholly within the fellowship, partaking of all the services of the church, a believer, and responsible for all that such a person was accountable for.

Although Cyril divides the initiatory rites in a threefold way, he himself is unclear as to the specific function of each, actually designating different rites with the same function.⁴⁶ Cyril at one place says that the Holy Spirit is imparted in baptism: "Being circumcised by the Holy Ghost through baptism, not in the foreskin of the body, but in the heart."⁴⁷ At other times the hearing in catechetical instruction itself seems the essential act. Again, unction, or

⁴⁶Lampe, op. cit., p. 216.

⁴⁷Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, VII, 30.

anointing with spiritual oil, is associated with anointing with the Holy Ghost:

And as Christ was in reality crucified, and buried, and raised, and you are in Baptism accounted worthy of being crucified, buried, and raised together with Him in a likeness, so is it with the unction also. As He was anointed with an ideal oil of gladness, that is, with the Holy Ghost, called oil of gladness, because He is the author of spiritual gladness, so ye were anointed with ointment, having been made partakers and fellows of Christ.⁴⁸

This holy ointment is no more simple ointment, nor common, after invocation, but it is Christ's gift of grace, and, by the advent of the Holy Ghost, is made fit to impart His Divine Nature.⁴⁹

Cyril shows an understanding of the vital relationship existing between the various phases of Christian faith and life. Each part is expressive of the whole, and the whole can be seen in each of its parts. But no part is sufficient by itself, finding meaning in its relatedness to the totality. But because the catechumenate was the first line of defense in the church's battle for self-preservation against persecution, heresy, and domination by a friendly culture, it was to a degree utilized by Cyril and his times to perpetuate the church as a body of believers holding right doctrines and attitudes and ways of life, instead of a living fellowship of the Spirit under the

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 149.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 150.

living and present Lordship of Christ.

The Middle Ages

The strength of the church in the early centuries was the dynamic faith of its members. The thorough examination and instruction of candidates for membership in the church as participating fellows of a community, with its accompanying training period in the Christian worship and moral life, was one of the means of cultivating a transforming faith in individual and society. However, in the transition from the status of minority to majority, the persecuted to the dominant influence, the church failed to safeguard itself by keeping its instruction program abreast of its current needs. When heathens began crowding to the baptismal font, and the church began exerting a strong influence in political and social life, the temptation was to utilize its status for its own enhancement instead of its true spiritual function.

The church can be seen at its best in the person and writings of Augustine at the beginning of the fifth century. Augustine's faith was itself evidence of God's grace, God's unmerited expression of his attitude of love and acceptance toward us. His own faith grew from what he described as an immediate encounter with God,

wherein God called Augustine to find rest in Him and to receive as pure gift the blessings of God. The reformers could later find in Augustine the evangelical understanding of grace as God's Word to us, and could appeal to his writings as examples in truth.

But in Augustine we also find the ambivalent attitude, arising out of pressing necessities of church life, that the immediacy of life under God must be cushioned by a hierarchy of church and truths already believed. Institutions have always been able therefore to appeal to Augustine for their static conceptions of Christianity, their legalistic understanding of the gospel, and their appeal to right doctrine and organization, instead of a direct fellowship of the Spirit under Christ's Lordship. The vibrant faith of Augustine, itself responsible for his expansive activity and writings, was utilized to promote a static and institutionalized faith which was not consistent with the kerygmatic nature of his faith. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Lord, which was always the climax of instruction because in Him was manifest God's primary proof of His love for us, was made the instrument of a self-perpetuating organization. Merit took the place of grace; ethics the place of fruit of the spirit; membership the place of fellowship; symbolic baptism

the place of reality—act baptism; learning about God the place of immediate encounter with God.

In the face of other religious ideas, persecution, and dominant alien philosophies, the church had to emphasize that Christianity was the only true religion. With its participants sorely tempted to forsake Christ due to the pressures exerted from outside, the leaders clearly saw that they must be encouraged to hold to the "way of life." All other ways became the "way of death."

During the period of the early church fathers, three kinds of preparation were stressed by them in their instruction: (1) renunciation—instruction in what they had to give up; (2) faith—instruction in what they had to believe, and (3) a series of exorcisms by which the devil was to be driven out of them.⁵⁰

Each of these, while having its place in the church with a deep Christological and living faith, became means for perpetuating a false concept of the Christian faith and church when the deep evangelical truth was lost. Renunciation received the emphasis that it was the means of faith, instead of the fruit of faith. Faith became assent to propositions listed by the church, and not the evidence of a deep fellowship between man and God, and man and man, wherein Christ gave renewing, redeeming, and forgiving power through His living Lordship. Exorcism became magical in its power, creating superstition

⁵⁰Bellinger, op. cit., p. 51.

and uncritical allegiance instead of reasoned truth and faith.

Because of the increasing numbers seeking admission into the church, the period of instruction was shortened until it eventually became nothing but the symbolical act, which originally followed the preparatory period and effectively dramatized the significance of its act, but now seemed nothing but a mystical and liturgical act possessing a magical power. Learning was confined, at the most, to memorization of the creeds or short statements of the faith, without securing understanding of them. Ethical requirements were dropped or compromised. Reception of the sacramental act of baptism, observance of certain rituals, and keeping of some outwardly ethical practices constituted good church membership. By the seventh century the subjugation of all but the liturgical features of the previous catechetical instruction procedures was completed, and lasted with only spasmodic interruptions until the reformation period.

It is our conclusion that the pressures of a growing church membership forced the church into systematized ways of instructing its converts and members. This was inevitable, and need not have caused any serious loss. But an example of what happened was the

division of the initiatory rite into separate and independent rites, each with its own significance. Doctrines were of necessity soon developed to rationalize these divisions, but these doctrines, because they were only segments of the total experience of the individual and church, were static, dead, unrealistic, confining, and susceptible to making faith, which originally was a living vibrant experiential attitude of trust and confidence in the present Lordship of Christ as He lives within the church, into a series of propositions to be assented to in order to assure correct belief and status. As the population became somewhat stabilized as Christian, and instruction became largely confined to the children of believers, the educational life of the church began to dwindle. The catechumenate especially began to exist in name only. The church became an institution interested more in its own self-perpetuation than in placing itself and its people under the more unpredictable and more demanding claims of Christ's Lordship. The dark ages were the extreme of this loss of vibrant kerygmatic faith; history since then has evidenced such darkness, with occasional fresh insights into life in the Spirit, in which the church is the head and heart of that fellowship.

Luther and the Kerygmatic Element

Because Luther has such an important place in the history of the Christian church, it is incumbent upon us to evaluate his ideas upon religious education, particularly the place of the kerygmatic element in his view of the Christian faith. Our plan is to examine his own personal experience and theology as the key to his educational ideas.

The development of Luther's theology.—Luther was greatly influenced, both intellectually and experientially, by the Ockhamist doctrine of grace. According to Ockham, grace was entirely transcendent. Justification did absolutely nothing to the person. It only resulted in a relatio-externa,⁵¹ an external relationship in which man's acts remained completely human and natural. Grace remains completely outside man, so that man's actions are accounted salvific only in the eyes of a merciful God. All acts and devotions therefore remain purely human activity. Man's spiritual powers are never changed by God's grace. God's grace is always his free decision to accept man, both prior to and after grace.⁵¹

⁵¹Karl Adam, One and Holy (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1951), pp. 33-43.

This view appears to present justification and salvation as entirely the work of God. However, it actually emphasizes the human factor in justification. For, though man is called to salvation by God's grace in a predestined manner, man can and must work out his whole salvation by his own power and by his own self-mastery. Seen from the human side, this type of predestination, in which man's spiritual powers are nowhere effected, appears to make salvation depend solely upon human power unaided by God. Therefore, although it starts with the thought that justification is entirely the work of God's grace, it ends with making man autonomous and independently working out his own salvation.

Luther grew up to believe as he had been taught, that God had given man His commandments and rules for the good life, and He lets us go our own way, and then judges us according to our compliance to this set standard. God's righteousness required a return righteousness from us. Man has freedom, and can, if he would, attain the fulfillment of the commands of God. Luther became a monk because he believed this the best way of standing before God. By meditation, prayer and discipline he would come to that perfect love for God that God's commands required of him. Only in this way

was it possible to please God and attain righteousness.

At least one Roman Catholic writer, Karl Adam, is convinced that Luther never really appreciated the pre-Lutheran Thomist doctrine of grace, which is now that church's classical doctrine of grace. Adam claims that Luther's involvement with Ockhamist's doctrine of grace blinded Luther's eyes to the Thomistic contention that "Man can and must work out his salvation by the power of Christ, [emphasis is Adam's] that all human choice and action only become salvific when it is caught up in the grace of Christ."⁵² This Thomistic view of man sees man as a passive agent in God's hand, unable to work out his salvation except in grace and through grace.

In fact, the phrase "salvation by faith alone" has never been alien to Catholic theology. It was in fact always Catholic teaching that we can only be saved by Christ alone, that it is only God's unmerited, unmeritable grace that lifts us out of the state of sin and death into that of divine sonship, and that even the so-called "meritorious acts" which the redeemed perform in a state of justice are only "meritorious by grace," attributable, that is, to the love of Christ working in and through us. In so far as the justification of man is God's work alone, we could speak with Luther of "extrinsic" justice. It is indeed also interior and personal. Luther too, in that same commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, affirms that this extrinsic justice "dwells in us by faith and hope," that it is "in us" though it does not belong to us.⁵³

⁵²Ibid., p. 57.

⁵³Ibid., p. 59.

It was the Thomistic school itself which anticipated Luther's pessimistic view of humanity, since it taught that the capacity of fallen man to receive God's action is purely passive, which grace alone can arouse to activity and freedom. We can affirm absolutely that Luther's battle, fundamentally and essentially, was only with the Ockhamist perversion of the Catholic doctrine of justification, with an abuse within the church, as Melancthon rightly saw, which was never accepted by the church.⁵⁴

It is the task of historical research to determine to what degree Luther was reacting to Ockhamistic conceptions of grace and not the Thomistic conception. It also is an open question as to which concept was dominant at that period, for the Thomistic interpretation had declined in influence during that period. But, for Luther, even the more satisfactory Thomistic concept of grace was objectionable. Where merit exists, it is still a matter of the worthiness of man to stand before God. Thomas had spoken much about grace, and could say that there was no merit without grace. But his whole conception of salvation was one still of merit, for the operation of God's infusing grace was to put into us the necessary love and faith so that we might merit justification by our own fulfilling of the demands of righteousness. Although the fulfillment of the demand of righteousness was dependent upon the grace of God, it nevertheless was thought of as a legalistic

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 60.

demand made upon God. The decisive factor is still the worthiness of man to stand before the great Lawgiver, regardless of how merit is acquired. Righteousness is still something demanded of man prior to acceptance of him by God; grace then is the mere infusion by supernatural power of that which enables man to claim his worthiness. As long as grace is used in the sense of enabling man's work to be counted meritorious, and not in the sense of "grace alone," the burden of appearing before God as righteous falls upon man, not upon God.

Both the Ockhamistic and Thomistic doctrines of grace are conducive to a state of tension between fear and hope. This tension, particularly evident in religiously sensitive souls, was particularly useful to the medieval church which tried to control the life of its members. Hell was constantly threatened to people in order to instill enough fear to drive them to the church and sacraments. Absolution and indulgences somewhat relaxed the pressure on these sensitive souls, but in order to keep people from too much complacency, purgatory was made all the more vivid. God, who had always been conceived as both Father and Judge, was presented in His wrath more often than in His mercy. If Christ was at times presented as the kindly interceding Son, He was more often presented as the terror-

provoking Judge.⁵⁵

Such a concept of God and the righteousness which he demands was untenable for people then, as it is now. The escape was for the church to relieve man of his intolerable existence in the immediate presence of God. In its dogma, ritual, and confessional, the church sought to protect individuals from the overwhelming effect of an immediate experience with such a God. Creedal religion had the function of safeguarding the people from the devastating immediate experience of being left alone with God. In case people did have such an immediate experience they were referred to the church for confirmation or denial, thus protecting individuals from too direct an encounter with God. When fear became too unbearable, the assurance by the church of divine grace was possible through the confession and absolution system.

Luther was completely a child of his time in fearing the God presented to him, and his efforts were spent in trying to placate Him. But the more he devoted himself to prayer and fasting, the mightier and more majestic the divine Majesty became, and he more of an unworthy pigmy. If God is Holiness, how then could he, a transgressor, stand before Him? Luther could only

⁵⁵Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1950), p. 23.

feel anfechtung, which is "all the doubt, turmoil, pang, tremor, panic, despair, desolation, and desperation which invade the spirit of man."⁵⁶ Perhaps, it occurred to Luther, God's Holiness is so great that God cannot be placated by sinful man? Perhaps nothing that man can possibly do can help. Perhaps God is so absolutely above man that God cannot be effected by considerations of human justice?

It is certainly not true that Luther's sense of fear of God resulted from moral depravity on his part. Luther's fear resulted out of his unusual degree of sensitivity, and his taking seriously the claims of God upon his life. Luther said later "I did not learn my theology all at once, but I had to search deeper for it where my temptations took me."⁵⁷ Again, Luther says "living, nay, rather dying and being damned, make a theologian, not understanding, reading, or speculation."⁵⁸

The great fear of Luther stemmed from his very existence. His anxiety was the anxiety of existence itself, involving his total existence. He had to know

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 31.

⁵⁷Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1953), p. 102.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 102.

whether he could stand before God at all. Unless he found an answer to this question, he felt that he was lost. With the popular view of God which moderns hold, such a question seems unlikely. But this was Luther's sole concern. Luther was not moved by any great ideas about freedom of the conscience or releasing man from ecclesiastical controls. He was concerned with pleading with God for his very existence. It was a life and death matter how he might stand before God. To the sensitive soul willing to face God in direct, immediate encounter, there is the recognition of an unutterable loneliness. Lilje quotes Luther as saying "Death claims all of us, and every one must die for himself. I cannot be with you, and you cannot be with me."⁵⁹ Luther argues that man may, while he is alive, delude himself into believing that his fate is in his own hands, but at the last, at the moment of death, even this illusion is shattered, because dying places him in that position where he knows that no one can take his place. His extinction faces him glaringly. At this moment the claim of God is inexpressedly forced upon man so that perhaps for the first time he really comes face to face

⁵⁹Hanns Lilje, Luther Now (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1952), p. 112.

with God. But every man is aware, at least unconsciously, that this loneliness of man is not restricted to death alone, but that death reflects its light upon the whole of life. Even in life we are aware that no one can substitute for us, that we cannot trade our existence with anyone else. Therefore, in life as in death, we are faced with God.

The "dread of existence," the dread which is fearful of existence itself, sometimes called "existential anxiety," was the description of Luther prior to his insights into the glorious gospel which he discovered in scripture. Luther's problem was doubt about God. It was doubt, not in the weakened form in which we see it in agnosticism, but in the piercing form of wondering whether God had forsaken him and no longer cared for him. The fool who lives in a finite world may fool himself into feeling secure and satisfied. However, the soul which recognizes the infinity of existence and claims of God upon his life, when he doubts that this God cares for him, is in the most devastating position possible. Luther was in such a position, for he was honest enough both to recognize the demands that God made upon him, and the fact that he was unable to meet them. Those who understand the claims of God in a moralistic sense cannot grasp the guilt that Luther felt.

It was not moral failure, the failure in keeping precise commands, but the existential guilt of his total human inability to live up to the divine command, which concerned Luther.

It is only as we understand this personal struggle of Luther that we can understand the dynamic of the reformation. His significance lies precisely in this struggle which went on in the innermost recesses of his soul. The conflict which he fought out in his own soul is the key to the conflict which the western world has had to fight out. Luther did not begin with a cultural program or an ecclesiastical reform, but he was simply following his own path through life, fighting the problems of faith wherever they led him. Luther described his experience as "God had led me through all this like a blind nag." But out of this whole personal experience came Luther's interpretation of scripture and faith and salvation which gave the Protestant Church its direction.^{60, 61}

A modern writer says that:

In any "final" judgment the righteous are proved not to be righteous. The final enigma of history is therefore not how the righteous will gain victory over the unrighteous, but how the evil in every good

⁶⁰Adam, op. cit., p. 29.

⁶¹Lilje, op. cit., p. 48.

and the unrighteousness of the righteous is to be overcome.⁶²

It was to such a realization that Luther came, which prompted his complete despair of ever gaining the pleasure of God. To those who think of God as benevolent granddaddy it is difficult to imagine how Luther felt. But it is easily understood for those reared to think of God as a blazing light, an overwhelmingly Moral Perfection, Pure, and by His very nature instantly destructive of anything evil. Luther, who never ceased to think of God in these terms, had to find his peace with God in spite of the fact that he knew himself unrighteous.

The resolving of this problem came as Luther searched the scriptures, particularly the Psalms, Romans, and Galatians in the years 1513-1517. In his writings on the forty-ninth Psalm, for instance, Luther indicated that he interpreted "They will praise Thee when Thou shalt do well with them" as really implying that men do not worship God, but themselves. Men make their own salvation their end, delighting more in their own salvation than in the Savior, in the gift more than

⁶²Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), II, 43-44

in the giver. This assertion of the ego, Luther rightly saw, was in every action and thought of man, and to the sensitive soul this could only mean condemnation before God, alienation from the Holy and Good. But he began asking himself about the meaning of the twenty-second Psalm: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He concluded that when Jesus quoted this psalm it was because Christ also felt himself forsaken, deserted, abandoned by God. Christ, then, also had "anfechtungen." But what could this mean? Luther knew perfectly well why he himself had had them: he was weak in the presence of the Mighty, he was impure, he had blasphemed. But Christ was not weak, Christ was not impure, or impious, Christ ought not be desperate. The answer, Luther felt, must be that Christ took to himself the iniquity of man. Christ identified himself with man, so as to partake of man's alienation. Christ felt himself, along with mankind, estranged from God. But if this were so, then he had a new picture of Christ. Christ is still the judge, but in judging he suffers with man and feels himself with them subject to condemnation. But if this were true of Christ, it was also true of God. The All Terrible is also the All Merciful. God's wrath cannot be seen apart from His love, for His wrath and His love fuse upon the cross.

The basic difficulty for Luther centered in his understanding of the "justice" or "righteousness" of God. It was in his studies on the Epistle to the Romans, he tells us, that his understanding was clarified as to the relation of this "justice" to His love and mercy toward man. Luther writes:

I hated the term "justice of God," for I had been taught by the practice and disputations of the doctors to understand it philosophically as a formal or active justice by which God himself is righteous and punishes the sinner and unjust. I could not love the righteous God who punishes the sinner and I hated him. . . . I meditated day and night until I noticed the connection of the words: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed as it is written: The just shall live by faith." Then I began to understand the righteousness of God as the kind of righteousness which enables the just to live by the gift of God, ~~idea~~, "by faith." The gospel makes the justice of God manifest, that is, the so-called passive justice by which God justifies us by faith out of his mercy and compassion, as it is written: The just shall live by faith. I felt like one who had been born again. The doors had swung open and I had entered into paradise itself.⁶³

Now Luther reinterpreted everything in the light of this. The work of God is not the work which God requires of us, but the work God does. The power of God is the power by which God strengthens us. The wisdom of God is the wisdom by which he makes us wise. The love of God is God's love for us which is the sole initiator of our love for Him.

⁶³Lilje, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

If it was by faith that the righteous should live, then it surely was not by merit. With this understanding, Luther was able to distinguish between Law and Gospel, and able to make the proper connection between righteousness and grace. The righteousness revealed in the gospel was different from what he had traditionally believed, and different from the righteousness spoken of by the Law, and different from the righteousness resulting from infused grace which enables man to be worthy of eternal life. The righteousness of God must mean,

not the righteousness which was retributive, by which He justly visited sinners with His wrath, but a righteousness by which He justified sinners and made them righteous. It must, in fact, be one with His grace.⁶⁴

Luther had been asking how he might fulfill the commandments of God and thereby attain a keeping of the Law which might please God and win His acceptance. Now he realized that he was asking the wrong question; it was not for him to attain to a certain kind of law-keeping, or such contrition that he might secure grace that would make him acceptable to God. Rather, God freely forgave his inability to overcome his sinfulness and accepted him unworthy and sinful as his own.

⁶⁴Philip S. Watson, Let God Be God (Philadelphia; The Muhlenberg Press, 1950), p. 20.

Luther gained a new conception of God--rather, he entered into a new relationship to God, a relationship established not on the basis of Luther's righteousness--his fulfillment of the commandment of love toward God according to the Law--but on the basis of God's righteousness--God's fulfillment of His promises of love, according to the Gospel, toward Luther.⁶⁵

Luther's concept of God's righteousness or justice was now changed. Before, he had thought of God's righteousness as the strict enforcement of the Law by an appropriate sentence for the misdeed committed. Now, righteousness was to him more like a parole by a judge, or a suspended sentence, with the judge taking a personal encouraging and confidential interest in the prisoner, thereby instilling within the man a new power and hope. Only this understanding of righteousness eventually serves the true purpose of justice, which is to redeem and reclaim.

Grace was no longer thought of in connection with merit, but only in terms of gift, the undeserved and undeservable outpouring of the mercy of God. God does not deal with men in any impersonal way, nor judiciously as a magistrate in court, but rather in a familial way, the way of a Father who does not consider what His children merit or deserve, but what they need for their own fulfillment in becoming mature persons in their own

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 21.

right. And this gift, this Divine outpouring of His love, is received alone through faith. For man to think of his own merit to achieve it, to claim his own worthiness, is blasphemy against God, because it obscures the true glory of the living God, who wills to act for His people. To insist on coming before God with our own righteousness would not only be impossible, but it would be robbing God of His Divine claim to redeem His people.⁶⁶

Luther's argument was not that the church failed to use the words "grace," "faith," "God's righteousness," but that the words were used wrongly. Gordon Rupp⁶⁷ speaks of the reformation as a crisis in Christian vocabulary. God's righteousness is not what He commands, but what He gives. Love of God is not our love for Him, but His love for us. Grace has nothing to do with merit, for to include the thought of merit misunderstands the nature of the self-giving, active, unmotivated, spontaneous, sufficient grace of God.

The interpreters of Luther, in clarifying his view of the distinction between Law and Gospel, have often spoken as if the righteousness of God were in

⁶⁶ This is the theme of Watson's book about Luther, "Let God Be God."

⁶⁷ Rupp, op. cit., chap. I.

opposition to the love of God. Walther, for instance, sees the Law as an expression of "His holy and righteous will" over against "His good and gracious will" as seen in the gospel.

The Law is to require of every one perfect righteousness; the Gospel is to present gratis the righteousness demanded by the Law to those who have it not (that is to all men).⁶⁸

The redemptive love of God works in conjunction with the righteousness and holiness of God. These divine attributes which God expounded to man in the Law are not put out of commission by the love of God, but without destroying the sinner, as He has threatened to do, God by His redeeming love finds a way to meet the demands which God's righteousness and holiness require of man.⁶⁹

Through the sinless life of Christ on earth God had created a treasury of righteousness which was designed by God to be given gratis to every sinner as his own, to be regarded as the sinner's own righteousness. Therefore, the sinner would be righteous by proxy, by the foreign righteousness of Christ. Such work of God was considered the work of God's love, which satisfied God's righteousness.

This dualism between God's love and His righteousness was not Luther's view. Aulen, of the Swedish

⁶⁸C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897), p. 46

⁶⁹Ibid., p. vi.

school of Luther research, contends that Luther's view was that "For the Christian faith the existing tension [between judgment and mercy] does not appear as something separated from divine love, but rather as something inseparably connected with it."⁷⁰ He contends that it is in the very nature of love that it must react against anything which is incompatible with itself, or else it would lose its own character.

If righteousness is understood as a comprehensive expression of God's opposition to evil, this reaction also must be understood as the reaction of love. It is not, therefore, a question of a dualism between God's love and His righteousness. Christian faith can never under any circumstances separate righteousness from love, but must always regard righteousness as an element defining love; on the other hand, God's opposition to evil is never purely negative, but in reality always intends to conquer that which stands in opposition to His love.⁷¹

As Luther came into a new relationship with God through the love of Christ, he no longer thought of the love and mercy of God as distinct from the judgment and power of God. Grace and righteousness are not opposed. The true power of God is the suffering and death of Christ in humility on the cross. The Law and power of

⁷⁰Gustaf Aulén, The Faith of the Christian Church (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 138.

⁷¹Ibid , p. 141.

God are in the service of the love of God. The important thing about the suffering and death of Christ is that it was the very Son of God, the full revelation of God, who was on the cross. Christ had the same decision to make that God has always had to make, to judge man or through His own act of suffering and death redeem him. The choice of Christ to die indicates that God's love is sovereign, that judgment and grace take place in God Himself, that true judgment is itself an act of love and therefore acts upon itself for the redemption of man. God brings fellowship between Himself and man on the basis of grace, for it is His nature to love, and His death and atonement and righteousness are throughout acts of love. In fact it is only in love that one finds what the righteousness and sovereignty of God really are. Man does not even recognize God until he recognizes that God's righteousness is His own act of justifying the ungodly. Man does not recognize the power of God, or the absoluteness of God, or His sovereignty, or especially the love of God, until he sees that it is God Himself who wills and acts to forgive and save sinners, and not to condemn, punish, and destroy.

This picture of the righteousness of God colors every aspect of Luther's theology. Whereas previously

he had understood the Word of God in its normal sense then held in the church, that the Word of God is the prescriptions given to man showing him how to live so as to satisfy God, now he understood the Word of God to be God's direct, immediate, personal encounter with us, where He declares His love and purpose for us, and gives us His righteousness and gives us power to live in His righteousness. God's Word, in its larger sense, is all of God's activity. God's Word, in its narrower sense, is His direct appeal to us in the Bible, in the spoken word, and in the sacraments, which all call us to receive what God has done for us in Christ and which is being continually done for those who receive Him.

To the Roman Church, the church was the possessor and dispenser of the requirements of God, and the sacraments, which infuses man with the necessary grace to merit righteousness.

To the Roman Church, Christ is the source of grace, but grace itself is a metaphysical medicine which trickles down from Christ via the Church, the hierarchy, and the sacraments, to make the sin-sick soul well. But to Luther grace is a personal relation, a direct experience of judgment and forgiveness.⁷²

To Luther the church exists to proclaim the Word and administer the sacraments, which tell of the wonders

⁷²T. A. Kantonen, Resurgence of the Gospel (Philadelphia, the Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 52.

of what God has done and the grace by which sinners are already made righteous. Thus the point is made that salvation is not an act of man, but of God; salvation is not anthropocentric, but theocentric.

Without any complementary human effort man receives, purely as a gift, that justification which he seeks in vain to attain for himself. The meaning of the whole message of the Bible--is this: that it is not man's efforts by way of the Law--and the human effort is always the way of the Law--but that God by the way of grace gives the true relation to God and therefore the true existence. For in its actual specific message the Bible does not deal with the God who demands, and the man who acts, like every other sacred book; but it speaks of the God who acts and man who receives the Divine gift.⁷³

But, does not Luther's concept of the gift of righteousness as an act of God undercut motivation for the ethical life? Luther would answer no, just as Paul had answered years before in Scripture. Although it is true that salvation as a gift of God takes away the motivation of love for our neighbor in order to reap the reward of good works, it does not take away a sufficient cause of love for the neighbor. That cause is the overflowing of the Divine love given to man by God through Christ. As such it enables man to begin doing really good works, for they are not done as the "sinner" looking for appropriate rewards for action, but done in

⁷³ Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), p. 76.

praise and thankfulness to God. For Luther the problem of the good life is not a mere doing of some apparent good works, nor on the other hand merely doing sinful acts. It is not that man sins, nor that he is sinful, but that he is a sinner, and as such his every act is blasphemy against God, for it is self-seeking. Normally, people say that though they may sometimes fail in their external behavior, in their innermost hearts they desire right. However, Luther felt that the opposite was true. Though occasionally the outward action may appear good, in the innermost hearts is sinfulness. Therefore the most rebellious state to be in against God is to be confident about oneself, to consider one's actions good. Luther knew that the ego was quite skillful in deceiving itself, and for this reason felt led to deny all religious value to ethical conduct.

The Swedish school, under Nygren, condemns any ulterior purposes for good acts, and in this they are consistent with Luther. The Roman point of view was that the intention behind good actions give them religious value and confer merit upon the doer. But seeking blessedness ourselves by our actions towards others, acting toward others because of our own interest in it, is not outgoing love, but self-seeking love.

Eros is to love another for what it will mean to oneself; it is to be of contrite heart out of fear of punishment or the hope of reward, and not true sorrow and repentance and unselfish love for God. Although Luther never used the terms eros and agape, but only caritas, it would not be hard to show that Luther would bitterly oppose all thought of the egocentricity of eros or even caritas, and champion the agape concept.

The identification of eros with egocentricity, and agape with theocentricity, makes it possible for Nygren to describe Luther's contribution to the Christian idea of love as the shattering of the caritas-synthesis by the elimination of eros and the restoration of agape. When Luther discovered the new basis for justification, the "righteousness from God," he actually discovered agape. When he objected to the way of merit, he was actually objecting to eros.⁷⁴

Therefore, Luther's understanding of the righteousness of God made possible a real ethic, for man was no longer motivated to seek his own end in serving his fellowman. Man surely must serve his fellowman, but now he can serve him for his neighbor's sake and not his own hope of anticipated reward. God's love for man is unmotivated and it is spontaneous, man can do nothing to be worthy of it or to merit fellowship with God, but as the love of God for him overflows he can serve

⁷⁴Edgar M. Carlson, The Reinterpretation of Luther (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948), pp. 83-84.

his fellowman in praise and thanksgiving. Not that the sinner will ever transcend his own egocentricity, for only as he continually receives the offered forgiveness for being egocentric, being a sinner, is he a justified person. Such a concept completely ran counter to the Roman concept of sainthood and infused grace. By such infused grace, one could command God's blessedness through his own merit. But for Luther, man is always simul iustus et peccator, that is, saint and sinner at the same time. As ruled by God, man is spirit; as ruled by the devil, he is flesh. The distinction between flesh and spirit is the distinction between unbeliever and believer, between the old man and the new man. The essential character of the flesh, unbelief, and the old man is egocentricity. The egocentric will is prior to evil deeds, and it determines what is a good and what is an evil work. Therefore what is performed in this egocentric framework, regardless of its apparent goodness or badness, is evil.

This interpretation of evil and sin is radical; man is completely unable to present any righteousness in his person before God. In his discussion of Romans 5:14 Luther repudiates the Anselmic idea of original sin being only the absence of original righteousness. It is "not only a privation of light in the intellect

and in the strength of the memory," but even more "the loss of uprightness and powers of all our facilities, whether of the body or the soul, or the whole of the inward and the outer man."⁷⁵ Luther's anthropology was of the whole man, leaving no part exempt from divine judgment. The whole man was involved in sinfulness:

Totus homo caro, totus homo spiritus. Luther's point was that:

Man is not partly sinful and partly saintly. The whole man in his ~~satanic~~ revolt against God is "flesh"; the whole man in Christ-governed obedience to God is "spirit." . . . In himself he is altogether unacceptable⁷⁶ to God; in Christ he is altogether acceptable.

Therefore, faith must precede any activity that can be considered good from God's point of view, and this faith itself is the gift of God.

Luther came to his understanding of the "righteousness of God" in such a way that his understanding was also changed about the church, the Word of God, and ethics. This understanding was his Copernical revolution: his theology became theocentric instead of anthropocentric, God was seen as redemptive instead of punitive, loving and giving instead of condemning and demanding. It was on the basis of this understanding

⁷⁵Rupp, op. cit., p. 164.

⁷⁶Kantonen, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

that he felt compelled to say "here I stand, I can't do otherwise," for to revert back to his former position would have been to re-encounter anfechtungen while losing the good news of God's gospel action. To know that God's righteousness was not a stern, impossible, impersonal demand upon him, but was instead a loving, active, and personal gift to him, was the certainty that God had fellowship with him, forgiven him, and claimed him as His child. And it was out of such certainty that we must try to understand his contribution to Christian education.

Luther's theology in relation to his educational ideas.--While acting as an educator of students Luther came to his insights about evangelical truth. One need not agree with Painter's conclusion that Luther's "Letter to the councilmen of Germany" in 1524 was "the most important educational thesis ever written"⁷⁷ to agree that Luther was both interested in education and acted to promote it. His interest in general education was entirely promoted by his concern for the development of mental and moral individual responsibility necessary for the free evangelical faith. The worth,

⁷⁷F. V. M. Painter, Luther on Education (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1889), p. 307.

dignity, rights, duties, and responsibilities of the individual necessitated the universal education of all children.

But it was primarily in Christian education that Luther was interested. He wrote short forms of the ten commandments, the Apostle's creed, and the Lord's prayer for use by himself and other pastors in instructing the young. In 1523 he added a short form on the lord's supper. In preparing these, Luther knew of previous catechisms, but was probably not directly dependent upon them for subject matter or arrangement.⁷⁸

During 1527-1528 Luther helped take part in a general visitation of all the churches in respect to the Christian education of children. It was after noticing the carelessness, indifference, and ignorance on the part of both parents and pastors that Luther wrote his complete catechisms:

The deplorable condition in which I found religious affairs during a recent visitation of the congregations, has impelled me to publish this Catechism, or statement of the Christian doctrine, after having prepared it in very brief and simple terms. Alas! what misery I beheld! The people, especially those who live in the villages, seem to have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and many of the pastors are ignorant and incompetent teachers.⁷⁹

⁷⁸G. M. Bruce, Luther As An Educator (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1928), p. 174.

⁷⁹Luther's preface to his Small Catechism.

Luther's catechism was immediately used throughout the church as a teaching manual. Part of the reason for this immediate use was that the order of commandments, creed, and prayer was felt to be in accordance with the plan of salvation.⁸⁰ The Old Covenant, represented by the ten commandments, naturally lead to the conviction of sin when one is aware of his inadequacy to follow them. Thus, Luther's beginning with the Law was consistent with his own theology, for the failure to keep the demands of God lead one to thankful acceptance of what God has done for him in Christ, and then the keeping of the commandments are the result of the regenerate life in which thanks is given for that which has already been bestowed. Worthy reception of God's grace depends only upon desiring and accepting it, and not upon keeping the Law. Luther, in his large catechism, is emphatic that the first commandment embodies all the others, for all obedience, thanksgiving, and right living must proceed from the awe and love of God.

The Apostle's Creed follows the commandments, representing the New Covenant, and emphasizes faith and grace through Jesus Christ. Luther's treatment

⁸⁰ A. T. Jorgensen, Martin Luther: Reformer of the Church (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1953), p. 155.

of the second article evidences Aulen's concept of "Christ Victor" in which atonement is seen as a conquest, a successful invasion of the domain and power of evil.⁸¹ However, there is also the suggestion of Anselm's view of the payment of a debt.

After the conviction of sin and the awareness of God's grace, Luther turns to prayer, confession, the sacraments, and the duties of various Christians. His interpretation of these sections is consistent with his basic theology. The validity of baptism rests upon the Word, and not upon faith. Luther is confident about the objective efficacy of the sacraments; the miracle of grace by which saving faith is imparted is performed in the act of baptism itself, entirely independent of the person upon which it is performed. The doctrine of the real presence of Christ is important to Luther for the same reason, for this insures that the gospel in the supper, the activity of the living God who calls and works with and blesses the human race and who is involved with human guilt and death, is due to His initiation alone.⁸²

⁸¹W. D. Allbeck, Studies in the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1952), p. 238.

⁸²Lilje, op. cit., p. 130.

McGiffert⁸³ evaluates Luther's educational papers, especially his catechisms, as a "most beautiful summary of the Christian faith and duty, wholly devoid of polemics of any kind, and so simple and concise as to be easily understood and memorized by every child." Other catechisms, such as the Heidelberg Catecheism and the Westminster Confession, are detailed and suited for the theologian; the ideas are presented in objective, impersonal, abstract, and propositional truths. Luther's works are always subjective, addressing the pupil as a church-member who faces these truths in a real, present or prospective experience.

Luther has been criticized by moderns for having sacrificed in his later years some of the earlier principles for which he had fought. Elliott states that Luther gradually substituted his own interpretations of the Bible for the authority of the Bible itself. Whereas Luther had been independent and free in using scripture, selecting for himself what was authoritative, he gradually abandoned the principle of the right of private interpretation and emphasized his own interpretations. Elliott sees this resulting in his

⁸³A. C. McGiffert, Martin Luther: The Man and His Works (New York: The Century Company, 1910), p. 316.

catechisms, in which he embodies what for him were the accepted doctrines.⁸⁴

No doubt, Luther was both liberal and radical at the beginning of the reformation, in the sense that the individual conscience took precedence over both church and state. However, Luther must be understood in terms of the situations which he faced. Calvin had had only to deal with a single city-state, and could advocate a Christian theocratic rule which identified the church and state in a coherent society. On the other hand, the Anabaptists completely separated the church and the state, because they were at odds with both. Luther, however, had to deal with a large number of separate states and princes and free cities, and therefore was compelled to place the church, as well as the schools, to some extent under the authority of the state. Particularly in his contact with the peasant uprising in 1525, with the discouraging results of the church-school survey, and in meeting the spread of the Anabaptist doctrine, Luther was forced toward more conservative attitudes and socially

⁸⁴Elliott, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

responsible programing in relating culture, state, and religion.⁸⁵ However, in his later years, it is simply not true that Luther substituted his own ideas in place of the authority of the scriptures themselves. Luther the reformer was always stronger than Luther the reactionary. It was his reformatory zeal itself which necessitated the stating of evangelical truths in simple, concise and definite form so that it might effectively be presented to the laity.

It is significant there is no mention of the Augsburg Confession in the Constitution of the Wittenberg Konsistorium. This omission is consistent with Luther's fundamental convictions. Luther never became a systematic theologian. He always remained primarily a Biblical exegete. To prove a position on the basis of the Augsburg Confession or other man-made dogma was foreign to this thinking, for it denied his fundamental principle of Sola Scriptures. That is why Luther's theology was every so dynamic, so relevant, so forceful. . . . During the age of the dogmaticians this vitality was lost in the effort to reduce Luther's thinking to a dogmatic system.⁸⁶

Conclusion.--We have seen that all of Luther's theology and educational insights were based upon his own experiences as they were enlightened by Scripture. Facing his own situation openly, he recognized that dread of existence, existential anxiety, which marks

⁸⁵Frederick Eby, Early Protestant Educators (New York: McGraw-Hill Company, Inc., 1931), pp. 16-20.

⁸⁶E. G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 618.

creaturely existence. He knew himself as a sinner, even though he was head and shoulders above most of his fellowmen. But he knew that every thought, action, devotion, prayer, and fast was an ego-directed movement which sought, not God's glory, but his own. When he encountered absolute demands made by a righteous God who demands righteousness from his creatures, he knew of his utter inability to stand before God with any kind of merit. To speak of God's grace as creating the possibility of merit which man then could use over against God, only caused him more anxiety, for he knew himself unable to think in terms of "demanding" anything from God.

In this situation Luther found in Scripture the gospel, the good news, that God was ready to justify him, not by anything which he did, but simply as a gift, freely bestowed upon all who would receive it in faith. That which made the terrific impact upon Luther was not the intellectually acceptable logic of this assertion, but the experientially attested acceptance which he encountered in this gospel truth. It meant for Luther that God was God in such a way that he had never before imagined. God was powerful, not in his demands, but in his self-giving love as seen in Jesus Christ. Whatever hope or love or joy or goodness or blessedness man

might know was all because Christ had suffered and died and risen again and had incorporated man into that victory. Explain it as he would, it meant that Christ's Lordship was a victory over all hostile powers, whether sin, death, hell, satan, or man's own righteousness itself. Luther had been justified, that is, accepted, by God, simply as he was. Experientially, what Luther described so succinctly in his phrase "justification by faith," the early church had proclaimed in the confession "Christ is Lord." Both of them were experiential attestations to the fact that Christ had triumphed over all powers, whether on earth or other realms or within the life of the believer himself. Christ does live, and this is the basis of all of man's certainty and hope, both for the future and the present.

Luther did not conceive of himself as an educator. He was primarily a Christian who searched the Scriptures for God's truths. But having come to such evangelical insights, and seeing the masses of people so frugally responding to this gospel good news, he was compelled to interpret in catechetical form these truths. We may quarrel with many of the methods he used to convey these truths, but we ought to hesitate in criticizing the statement and purpose which he presented in these writings. These are not statements of

propositional truths which were to be known intellectually, but were truths to be witnessed to by those who had experientially affirmed the loving, redeeming, forgiving, life-giving action of God in Christ.

Whether others could come to the all-embracing certainty and relevance of the gospel to which Luther came, without going through the periods of anxiety and despair which Luther had to pass through, is an open question. Surely, we can often see in the church which bares his name a sterility in the understanding of the evangelical truths so significant to him, and probably this results from its failure to participate in that existential anxiety resulting from self-analysis, honesty, and repentance, and which prepared the ground for Luther's understanding of the gospel and the certainty of his own justification. Unless one can experientially attest to the fact that

Christ has redeemed me; a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil,⁸⁷

there is little hope that a person will be able to affirm in all its power the resulting statement:

In order that I might be His, live under Him in

⁸⁷ Explanation of the second article of the Creed, Small Catechism.

His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.⁸⁸

Only one who has passed through the anxiety of doubt in God and society and self, and discovered in God's gracious gospel the power to be released from such anxiety together with the power to be caught up in victorious living, could meaningfully confess

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith.⁸⁹

The experiential discovery of God's gracious gospel, of justification through faith, of acceptance in spite of being unworthy, is the kerygmatic aspect of the Christian faith resulting from the kerygma. The proclamation of the saving acts of God in Christ, becomes truly kerygmatic, "gospel," only when proclaimed in a kerygmatic community, a "saving community," and when it meets a responsive acceptance. This kerygmatic element is the heart of Luther's concern in Christian education.

Conclusion

In this section we have briefly sketched the kerygmatic element as developed throughout the years

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Explanation of the third article of the Creed, Small Catechism.

in the church. In each period of history the kerygmatic element has been evident, but always in tension with a static conception of Christianity which threatened its essential life and saving power. The expediencies of the immediate situation always exerted pressures toward surrendering the freedom and individuality in the kerygmatic understanding of faith over to the safety and stability of institutionalized religion and compliance with propositional doctrinal truths.

In the face of heresy from within, the inevitable necessity of canonizing scripture also led to the further defining of truth in creedal statements which became then rationalizations of the faith rather than descriptions of the experiential relationship with Christ the Lord encountered within the community of redeemed people. Although both canon and creeds were attempts to safeguard the kerygmatic nature of faith for present life, both became understood and used as substitutes for a present experiential relationship.

In the face of the growing numbers from without, the tools of the church soon lost their vitality to promote relationship faith. The symbolical nature of the liturgy, which had meant the incorporation and involvement of the individual in the corporate life of the indwelt community, soon became primarily a

performance conveying little meaning to the viewer. The catechetical system, which originally had arisen to convey the dynamic faith of the Christian community to the new seeker, gradually became degenerated into a mere conveyor of dogma and a tool for inculcating a set of ethical ideas unrelated to Christ's Lordship. Initiation into the Christian community became little more than a public recognition that the person had accepted the authority of the ecclesiastical system.

Our study leads to the conclusion that the kerygmatic element was never completely lost to the church. The Kerygma is fact; God is living and acting now as He did in the past Event; life in the Spirit, meaningful relationship, redeeming fellowship go on under tension in every age. This can be seen most clearly in certain persons and groups, especially in the reformation period, as the gospel in the Bible frees itself from the forms in which it is written, as the doctrines of the faith pulsate with vitality in spite of the limitations of human conception put upon them, and as some of the fellowship of redeemed and redeeming people are alive with His Spirit even within the anemic church which bears His name. This vitality is the kerygmatic element, and the task of Christian education

in every age is to bring it to expression in the present situation. To this task we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KERYGMATIC FAITH FOR THE PROGRAM OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Kerygmatic Faith as the Fulfillment of Man's Existential Situation

A brief statement on the nature of kerygmatic faith.—Kerygmatic faith is an experiential affirmation of a saving God, a saving act, and a saving fellowship. It is first of all an experiential affirmation as to the purposefulness of existence as grounded in God both for the individual and existence as a whole. Such affirmation, although confirmed in daily observation and all experiences, is based pivotably on a specific act.

It is secondly an experiential affirmation that the individual and all existence finds ground for such a view of a saving God specifically in the act of this God in the life, death, resurrection, and Lordship of Jesus. To declare that Jesus is Christ and Lord is to declare that God has acted in the past to assure the victory of life and purpose of one's existential situation, and that one has found life and purpose for oneself in the present through a living transcendental relationship. Such affirmation, although ultimately

derived from the past act itself, is based on the experience within a present fellowship.

It is thirdly an experiential affirmation that the saving action of the saving God is the dynamic of a community indwelt by His Spirit which brings acceptance and fulfillment to the individual. It is a declaration, existentially conceived, that individual worth and purposefulness has been discovered in relationship, both with persons in community and with the Lord who stands behind that community.

The relation of Kerygmatic faith to man's existential situation.--The above definition of kerygmatic faith assumes that man has deep needs in the face of his life situation. If worth and purpose are affirmed and acceptance and fulfillment are pre-requisites for affirming kerygmatic faith, then it is assumed that man has known the need to be accepted and to find fulfillment. Kerygmatic faith is affirming that one's deepest felt needs have found adequate support and answers as grounded in God who has acted in the past and is acting in the present through His indwelt community.

The nature of man's existential situation to which kerygmatic faith affirms fulfillment.--Our present

purpose is to examine man's situational needs, by reference to several different attempted analyses by competent scholars, and to point out how kerygmatic faith is significant for man's situation according to such analyses.

Karen Horney's analysis.--Karen Horney's analysis of man's situation is in terms of the reciprocal relationship between dependency, hostility, and anxiety. Anxiety in any form generates hostility, and "hostile impulses of various kinds form the main source from which neurotic anxiety springs."¹ Anxiety is characterized by the feelings of weakness, helplessness, and inadequacy. Significant persons in one's environment then are depended upon for safety. But along with dependency feelings go hostile impulses toward the very one's depended upon, particularly when the significant persons in the environment are so wrapped up in their own neurotic needs as to be unable to love or conceive of one as the particular individual he is. But since one is actually dependent on the more powerful persons and this dependent relation is felt to be necessary at all costs, the hostile feelings are repressed. Repressed hostility then has two results.

¹Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Times (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1937), p. 62.

First, there is the lessening of one's spontaneous action, encroaching upon one's inherent capacities for independent action, and thus increasing the need of dependent feelings. Secondly, the repressed hostility is then projected onto others, especially the significant persons who aroused the feelings in the first place, and therefore repressed hostility only serves to increase the feeling that one is living in a hostile environment, itself the basis of anxiety.²

Horney recognizes anxiety at different levels, each overlapping the other. Normal anxiety is that which every human has because he is a person. It is a realistic appraisal of one's own weakness and inadequacy in the face of life's demands, death, powers of nature, and so forth. In itself it is a realistic appraisal of danger, a facing of the facts, without interpreting the danger as personal or hostility toward oneself as a person.

Normal anxiety, however, is the ground for basic anxiety, "meaning by this the feeling a child has of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile

²Rollo May, The Meaning of Anxiety (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950), p. 145.

world."³ Basic anxiety is a neurotic manifestation of the conflict between dependency and hostility toward the same persons, as described above. In the face of such conflict, the realistic evaluation of danger is undermined because of the accompanying increased feelings of helplessness and inadequacy, until neurotic defenses are developed as security measures from the threatening anxiety. Neurotic anxiety is therefore the result of inner conflict between dependency and hostility where the danger is the anticipated hostility of others. "The multifarious forms of personality disturbances are neurotic defenses created in the effort to cope with the potentially hostile world despite one's feelings of weakness and helplessness."⁴

Horney seeks to explain the working of the reciprocal relationship of dependency, hostility, and anxiety by her various categories of the self. She defines the "Real Self" as the central inner force common to all human beings and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of growth, which wills to grow in accordance with the potentials of one's generic and

³Karen Horney, Our Inner Conflicts (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1945), p. 4.

⁴May, op. cit., p. 142.

individual nature.⁵ This real self is spontaneous and inherent in man as an evolutionary constructive force. It is the spring of all constructive forces and energies, and constantly urging one to realize one's given potential.

The "Actual Self" is the realistic self, that which a person is at any given time when accurately perceived. The actual self never fully achieves the full potential of the real self, but to the degree that one accepts the actual self, one is healthy. As one accepts the actual self in larger degree, one is freer to operate spontaneously toward growth and fulfillment of the real self. If the environment is such as to give one favorable conditions for satisfying one's basic needs of inner security and freedom, one will grow according to the potentialities of the real self because the actual self will be reasonably accepted.

However, no one is completely free to grow according to his individual needs and possibilities. Each person in the child's environment, as well as in an adult's environment, is to some extent wrapped up in his own immediate needs and unable to care and love

⁵Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1950), p. 17.

the child as he ought. His relationship to this child is determined by his own needs, and not by the needs of the child. In the face of such relationships with significant persons in one's environment (for the child, it is usually parents), one feels insecure, vague apprehensiveness, uncertainty and helplessness. This feeling Horney calls "basic anxiety," the feeling of being isolated and helpless in a world conceived as potentially hostile. However, the child not only feels dependent upon his parents, but is actually dependent upon them. Therefore he feels cramped in his relationship with these significant others, and he is unable to respond spontaneously with real feelings and according to his real self potentialities. In one way or another he must so act as not to arouse either the displeasure of others or his own feelings of anxiety.

In order to meet the situation in which he finds himself, being unable to respond spontaneously in terms of his real self, and finding his actual self causing disturbances in his relationship with others, he turns toward the one area remaining for him, his imagination, in which he can create an "idealized image" of himself which he endows with the necessary powers and facilities necessary to cope with the demands of his environment. To the idealized image the actual self appears as a

threat and must be hated, for it does not measure up to the standard set up by the idealized image. Thus the actual self becomes a "despised image." On the other hand, the real self is hated because it is constantly striving to change the idealized image into something more in keeping with reality. Because the idealized image denies any need for change, refuses to admit inferior trends, and maintains a concept of perfection so as to deny tension, it is a hindrance to growth.

To some extent the idealized image is part of everyone's self concept. The battle to realign the idealized image in terms of the actual self is normally handled so as to keep somewhat true to reality. However, the discrepancy between the actual self and the idealized image (the "persona" or "mask") demands that either the idealized image must be realigned, or else the perceptions of the actual self must be repressed. If this is continued to the point where the idealized image is more real to him than the real self, he has become alienated from his real self, which is the complete identification of himself with his idealized image, and which Horney calls the "idealized self." At this point, in order to feel that he is liked or accepted by others, he has lost his own capacity to

measure his own values, spontaneity becomes paralyzed, he is dependent upon the wishes and opinions of others, he abandons his own growth forces, he has interiorized the wishes of his social environment, has been weaned away from his real self, and has sold his soul to the devil.

However, while the real self is prevented from achieving its potential growth, it is still active and driving the individual to reach beyond itself. For this reason the real self is hated, because it keeps reminding the idealized self that it is not based on reality. At the same time the idealized self hates the despicable actual self because it can never measure up to the stringent standards of the measuring rod of godlike perfection demanded by the glorified idealized self in its "Search for Glory." But to make matters unbearable, the actual self keeps interfering with the self he pretends to be; the idealized self always has to carry with it the interferring embarrassing actual self, resulting in feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and worthlessness, and fraud.

It is in this process that one begins to develop a moral value system, based upon his particular solution of his basic conflicts. If the sensitivities of his personality development demand compliance to his

significant environment, he soon idealizes this particular solution of subordination as unselfishness and goodness. If these sensitivities demand movement against people, he idealizes the aggressive patterns of rebellion and fighting as strength against opposition. If the sensitivities demand movement away from people he idealizes aloofness, self-sufficiency, and independence. This moral value system has developed out of the basic needs of the child in a social context of significant relationships, and dictates the directions of activity and growth for the individual, not along the directions of fulfillment of the potentialities of the real self, not along the direction of some objective, universal value system, but in the direction of actualizing the idealized self which is devoid of reality, possibility, and worth.

The analysis Horney makes of man's situation in terms of the Self and the reciprocal functioning of dependency, hostility, and anxiety is the ground work for an attempt at solution of man's problem. We shall discuss Horney's constructive attempts at solution for bettering long run relations between persons and show how our own understanding of kerygmatic faith is relevant to such solution.

The real hope Horney holds out for mankind is in the bettering of normal relationships, especially between parent and child, so as to permit growth according to the potentials of the real self without need of repressing the inevitable hostile feelings. However, any person who is the victim of such inadequate relationships (and all people are such victims to some degree) the only way out is by self-acceptance, that is, by re-identifying oneself with one's real self, as well as accepting one's actual self, so that growth toward further self-realization can continue. This demands self-knowledge, which is insight about oneself that includes both the intellectual and emotional. This self-knowledge meets resistance at first, for it is a threat to the whole idealized picture that has been constructed to maintain status in an imagined hostile world. After valiant attempts to perfect the idealized self, there must come the awareness that the demands of this idealization are neurotic and intrinsically impossible of fulfilling.

Self-acceptance requires first of all the acceptance of the necessity for change, based upon a realistic appraisal of one's self. Once this has been accepted, the pride system has been undermined. This is a disillusioning process, since the person now

knows that his efforts to actualize the proud self were self-defeating. Accepting the necessity for change is the crucial step, since it means disavowing the whole system upon which previous action was based, the death of the idealized self which grew in an effort to maintain oneself in the face of the threatening hostile world. The difficulty comes to be seen, not in external circumstances, but within, as a conflict between one's own pride system and one's own real self; between the striving toward perfection of one's idealized self and one's inherent need and desire to develop one's own given potentials as a human being. One's self-acceptance is thus an acceptance of past and present limitations (one's actual self--what one is) and also present and future possible assets (one's real self--what one could be). Thus one comes to see something good in oneself, one becomes aware of certain existing assets. This process of self-acceptance is never completed, but is always a beginning toward fuller self-realization enabling further growth in accordance with one's real self.

If this analysis is correct, how is one to come to self-acceptance? Self-knowledge and admittance of the need for change are intimately related to the very forces which have driven one to escape measures. At

this point, Horney refers to the nature of the real self. The real self is the source of all growth, is spontaneous, strives toward self-realization by evolutionary necessity, if given a chance. It is environmental forces which do not give the real self a sufficient chance to operate constructively. In that case, unless someone in the person's environment can serve in this capacity, an analyst is the answer, one who can be accepting and rewarding so as to break the vicious circle of dependency and hostility. The individual alienated from himself and his own inherent growth forces needs something or someone who will give him a hold, a feeling of identity. This begins the process of self-meaningfulness and the feelings of power and significance.

It is the contention of the present study that to affirm kerygmatic faith is to fulfil what Horney seeks. Normal anxiety, that which is implicit in our human situation in the face of death, powers of nature, and other inevitable constituents of life, is the base from which further anxiety grows. Caught in the inevitable conflicts of human relationships, this inadequacy of power soon will be associated with other hostile dependencies and inadequacies unless nature and existence itself is accepted as friendly. Kerygmatic

faith, which affirms the purposefulness of existence as grounded in a saving God, provides such an identification with a friendly world.

One who shares kerygmatic faith is aided on the road to self-acceptance by his affirmation of the accepting action of God in His historical action in Christ. This acceptance of oneself by God is based, not upon the qualities imagined in the idealized self, but upon the very qualities of the actual self even though that self is sinner and rebel against God. One is accepted, not as one wishes he was, but as he actually is. Experiencing such acceptance necessitates accepting the necessity of change; but this now becomes possible because for the first time the despicable hated actual self is free to be faced as it is, without the deluding imagined self of the defensive person. Having been accepted, for the first time one feels free to admit the inadequacy of the old pride system, to see the difficulty, not as outside or external, but within one's own person.

The self-acceptance that comes in kerygmatic faith is not simply an intellectual assertion. It is a reality-act, an experienced fact, or it is neither self-acceptance or kerygmatic faith. To have kerygmatic faith means to become aware of having been accepted in

a community of persons. To have kerygmatic faith means one has begun participating in a circle of relationship in which the actual self is freely acknowledged in all its weakness but where the real self is encouraged to express itself. Faith that is kerygmatic knows that status does not depend upon one's own ability to be entirely independent, because dependency has already been acknowledge, but that status does depend upon a gracious accepting of the love of others and on honest striving to realize one's given capacities.

Self-acceptance in Horney's thinking is more correctly called a process than it is a single act. Likewise, faith that is kerygmatic is also the result of a growth process. Self-acceptance is a growing process arrived at in various stages, although specific acts and experiences are the stepping stones in the process. Conversion is normally a growth in knowledge and grace at various levels, but the process of growth is made up of specific acts and experiences. Baptism is a specific act of God really accepting a person in his actual condition, although the person only realizes its significance in time. Forgiveness of God is complete, but is realized within the person only within the forgiving environment of a forgiving community, the people of God. Thus the long-range solution that

Horney presents, the bettering of relationships between persons so that they feel free to grow according to their own given potential is also made possible within the community of persons whose faith is kerygmatic.

Man's existential situation, as analyzed by Karen Horney, finds its needs met through the faith which is kerygmatic, according to our investigation. Christian education's task is to bring the Christian message to bear in man's situation so as to correlate his need to its solution in kerygmatic faith.

Fritz Kunkel's analysis.---Fritz Kunkel's analysis of man's situation is in terms of the "We-psychology" and can be very useful in understanding how kerygmatic faith fulfills man's deepest needs. Kunkel pictures life growing to maturity as a process from an "original-We" position through a "breach-of-the-We" to a "maturing-We." By virtue of being born, man is a part of a "We," a great human family, in which his life is linked with the rest of the race. It can be seen most clearly in the original-We of the family, especially mother and child. At first there are no barriers between the members of this We, and this mutuality is the basis of

all future groupness and love.⁶ But this original-We is fragile and easily upset because in this relationship the child is wholly dependent and linked to the mother in such manner as not to realize his own separateness and distinction as an I over against a Thou.

The "self," which Kunkel defines as the essential core of being, that which really is the unique individual, or could be, will not permit itself to be obscured in the illusionary original-We world, and therefore pushes toward a break in the unison of that We in which the self is lost. This "breach-of-the-We" is both inevitable and necessary. It is inevitable because the original-We is illusionary and stifling to the expanding needs of the self. The self, seeking to realize its potentiality, tries to "conquer the world," and this is opposed by the demands of others in society, even the mother. The shattering of the original confidence, loyalty, and security in the We is necessary in order to reach the Mature-We of living and productive community in which individual differences may be realized for the true fulfillment of the self.

The breach-of-the-We is the most terrifying

⁶F. Kunkel and R. Dickerson, How Character Develops (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), chap. I.

experience of childhood. Unless guided by proper sensitivities it brings a lasting fear of the "black giant," that which one feels has isolated one in the immense world by breaking the original-We. To the degree that the breach-of-the-We has been too early or too quick or cruel in happening, the self retreats to the protective screen of the "ego," which in Kunkel's vocabulary means an inaccurate mental image of the self, a seeming-self. "When the original-We is affected by the breach-of-the-We, ego emerges as the false image of the self."⁷ Feeling cut off from the original-We, which is fearing the black giant who has brought about the isolation, one becomes defensive or egocentric in one's actions and thinking.

Kunkel sees the educational task as helping people make a gradual transition from the original-We relationship to the mature-We relationship so as to overcome the harsh breaches which cause egocentric actions for defensive reasons. In the mature-We relationship one is objective, that is, one acts in accordance with the true nature of the self. Society is made up to a large degree of egocentric individuals each operating behind the masks of pretense or sham-We's. In the mature group, however, each individual has

⁷Ibid., p. 125.

successfully established uniqueness and separateness without shattering community or loss of courage.

Egocentricity eventually is self-defeating and demands a change within. One realizes from the uncomfortableness resulting from egocentric action that one is in need of readjustment of one's thinking and behavior. Egocentricity conflicts with egocentricity, until one is driven again and again to abandoning his ego. The egocentric form of life breaks down because it is erroneous in its content and too rigid in its form. The rigidity and inflexibility in thinking and behavior is an essential quality of the ego. But this essential quality is also the cause of its eventual breakdown and the inevitable facing of the crisis of readjustment. However, terrified by the insecurity resulting from the ego breakdown, one clings anew to the mistaken and inadequate system of thinking.⁸

No one ever becomes completely objective. It is conceivable that one may grow bit by bit into relative objectivity without experiencing more than minor disappointments, frustrations, and vexations which lead only to minor modifications of the ego pattern. However, Kunkel states, the higher degrees of objectivity

⁸Ibid., p. 113.

usually evolve only out of the collapse of the ego.⁹ Otherwise, adjustment is usually evasive instead of a real attempt to reach new productivity.

The collapse of the ego seems to the person involved as death itself, and indeed it is, for it is the end of the only self it knows, the false ego. Since egocentricity cuts itself off from We-ness, the We cannot help him. Reality, for him, is only his false self against the world. The false values, insights, and experiences which make up his mistaken system are the only ones which seem real to him, but these lose their validity because of their falseness.

The path through this crisis to a new start may take two directions, says Kunkel, the human or earthly and the religious. In the earthly path a certain sense of fellowship in a We consisting of humans is established. Such a person sees the world with new eyes, seeing connections, facts, values, goals, and possibilities he never saw before. The indispensable step in this path is the discovery of some human need to which one may minister, thus finding one's place in the service of the We. In this way he finds himself in a genuine service to others, and thus has

⁹ Ibid., p. 106.

reestablished a We-feeling relation to those humans from whom he felt cut off.

However, it is only the religious path through the crisis of egocentricity which Kunkel finds leads to the highest state of maturity. Along this path one finds the same points of growth as along the earthly, but the emptiness, loneliness, and indifference of life is met by the decisive insight

that he himself as well as the large unity, the We, is created, sent, supported, endowed and used by the Higher Reality, who rules the world and in whom indeed he and others live and move and have their being.¹⁰

One feels oneself gripped and influenced by God so as to share in a transcending We-ness with all of life. One feels oneself charged with a concrete task, commissioned to serve in the interest of humanity so that one is one with humanity.

Kunkel's analysis of man's needs in terms of threats to that We-ness necessary for maturity lends itself to our definition of kerygmatic faith. Something is needed to offset the threats resulting in egocentric withdrawal from actual reality and alienating one from one's own interior growth forces of the self. The community of the indwelt Spirit furnishes

¹⁰Ibid., p. 122.

the meaningful relationship and acceptance of both a human grouping and the transcending reality behind all existence necessary for the feeling of We-ness for productive living. The saving God is the purposive God who wills for one meaningful existence, who has Himself healed the breach of aloofness and inaccessibility, who has himself desired to be a Friend and not a haunting black giant to be feared and thus necessitating shammy egocentricity. Unless We-ness is established on the universality of the God-experience one is always under the threat of a black giant world even though good human relatedness has been established. The act of Christ, by which we have been accepted into a personal relationship of cosmic dimension just as we are, and in spite of our inadequacy, is just the needed experience in order to face reality without the fear of condemnation and therefore the need of withdrawal. The community of accepting persons provides the needed backdrop for a life seeking to fulfill the commission to serve and love others, for failure will not result in breaching the relationships in that community. The idea, necessary for productive living, that the whole cosmos is related to us in an initiating We-ness, is backed up in kerygmatic faith by the fact of a We-community and thus giving the idea concrete manifestation.

Karl Menninger's analysis.---Karl Menninger approaches his analysis of man's situation from the standpoint of the love-hate relationship and the self-perpetuating inter-action of resentments. It is his conviction as a psychiatrist that the troubles of the world which reflect themselves in war, discord, and prejudice are nothing other than the reflections of the multiple wars and discords in the hearts of individuals. What appears as discord on the national level is but a magnification of the war within each man of instincts and motives of which he is largely unawares.¹¹

Menninger believes that impulses toward destructiveness and constructiveness, toward love and hate, are both innate to the nature of human beings. He accepts a basic scientific postulate, that all human phenomena can be related to human beings, without recourse to unhuman factors. Menninger concludes that people do not learn to hate, but that they come into the world equipped with it. "The human child usually begins his life in anger."¹² In itself the ability to hate is not bad, but becomes bad if one does not

¹¹Karl Menninger, Love Against Hate (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1942), chap. 1.

¹²Ibid., chap. 2.

learn to use it wisely. With proper tutelage, with the proper environmental experiences, it is to be hoped that one will come to distinguish between objects that are properly to be feared, hated, and fought against, and those which ought to be loved, utilized, or accepted. The destructive and aggressive tendencies which a person is born with must be used discriminately in the service of self-preservation, which is supportive of the expanding constructive tendencies.

However, every child, regardless of how fortunate his life may be, confuses his differentiations between what ought to be loved and what ought to be hated. The same mother who brings the bottle, also takes it away; the soft cat scratches; the warm fire burns. Therefore the child does not grow entirely logical in its loving and hating, but to some degree always loves unwisely and hates unwisely. That is, he does not show love to the proper objects, and hate to the proper objects, at the right time, and in the right degrees, and in the appropriate ways. As a matter of fact, love and hate are always fused, so that there is often too much hate in relationships with those whom one ought to love, and too much love toward those whom one ought to hate. Therefore, the child feels towards all people and towards the world,

including the most ideal mother, both positive and negative feelings.

Menninger emphasizes the importance of childhood training in forming adult attitudes. For instance, the processes of regularizing eating and urination set up turbulent emotional reactions and conflicts in the child. The conflicts, between the child as a representation of nature, and the parent as a representative of society, persist throughout one's lifetime and become the character structure which expresses itself as stubbornness, retentiveness, extravagance, exhibitionism, and so forth. The child, at the mercy of its environment and powerless in the face of it, becomes weaned, not only from the breast of its mother, but also from the subsequent satisfactions necessary for good personality development, in such a way that the child feels robbed and cheated, and this then becomes its attitude toward society. As an adult, any threat is unconsciously connected with childhood experiences which have been too frustrating, and which have set up aggressive patterns within the child. Although these frustrations are inevitable, if they are too considerable, or too rapid, or too inconsistent, the child becomes the victim of these aggressive attitudes and these determine his personality.

Civilization, in becoming modern, has also become more thwarting to the basic needs of childhood. Whereas in primitive societies children could be left alone, free of parental restrictions, today we must of necessity restrain the child's natural healthy impulses so that he may exist in our highly complicated society. As adults we believe that it is much better for a child to be given the more compensating gratifications that come with civilization. However, the compensating gratifications given are invariably of an adult taste, and not apparent to the child in the early years of his life. The goals become less tangible, more distant, more abstract, and more substitutionary.

One of the objects of child life, then, is to obtain adulthood in order to aggrandize himself, to punish, and restrict those who then will be weaker than he, as he has experienced this himself in childhood. It is in this way that the revenge of parent upon child is perpetuated for another generation. The mother, who is the first and greatest source of pleasure and love, of necessity must transfer the child from the comfort of the womb and breast to the discomfort of the realistic world, and thus she becomes not only the object of affection, but also the object of bitterness and revenge. A vicious circle is at work. The mother,

herself often thwarted and resentful, particularly in a man's world, imposes restrictions and resentments upon her children. Children grow up and reenact the same errors. Males, who previously were these children, grow into dominating males, frustrating the female, and causing them to reciprocate toward both males and children.

This history of the aggressive instinct in any person can be traced in its development. At birth the self-absorption of the fetal state gradually begins to disappear, bringing hostility toward that which causes him to leave such comfort and safety. In childhood and adolescence aggressiveness is directed outward indiscriminatingly towards all that confronts the child. Gradually there is a development toward constructive energies assuming dominance over the destructive. "Evil itself, rather than persons felt to be foes, becomes the object of destructiveness, and the individual is then on the threshold of complete maturity."¹³ Whatever aggression remains is directed toward existing real dangers, and not toward other persons and oneself. This process of the victory of the life instincts, or love, over the death instinct, or hate, is called sublimation. Aggressive destructive energy is turned

¹³Ibid., chap. 5.

toward useful channels and employed in constructive service. Healthy adulthood, then, consists in being able to invest love in a full satisfying way toward husband, children, friends, society, and finally toward the universe and non-human forces; and at the same time aggressive tendencies will have been invested or sublimated in ways protecting, supporting, and fostering love. In healthy persons then, aggressive impulses have become neutralized by love impulses. Some of them must of necessity have been completely repressed; some have been expressed directly in defending oneself and others against properly feared objects; much is expressed in sublimations of constructive channels; and some are internalized as conscience.

This then is the history of every man. When there is reasonable satisfaction of basic needs in childhood, and continuing throughout life, and when in adulthood there is willingness and ability to face ones hostile feelings openly, we say that person has a healthy personality. But to some degree all of us have been forced to repress resentment at our frustrations, and have repressed these into the unconscious, where they remain active in our later personality makeup. As adults, there exists a dread lest others see through our masks to see us as our real

selves, selves who have repressed hostile feelings, so that we might appear as lovable, friendly, and worthy persons. This dread leads us to shun friendships, avoid intimacies, and to keep those we do form on a superficial level. This dread leads us to underestimate and under-appreciate others, lest they come to estimate and appreciate us all too realistically as we truly are.¹⁴

The inability to face the fact that there are aggressive feelings within us is evident in the attitudes of fear, stubbornness, temper, in the inability to love and form warm friendships, and in the existential anxiety which we humans feel about our existence. We desire to love and to live in friendship, but for some inexplorable reason we feel aggression towards those we desire to love. The very ones we most desire to love and receive their love are the ones who have the most hostile feelings toward. They are the very ones who touch us most deeply and therefore hurt us most deeply and most deeply fail to satisfy us. The inevitable development of love-hate toward persons and the world becomes a vicious circle perpetuated from generation to generation. For the individual

¹⁴Ibid., chap. 10.

in need, and society in general, this circle of perpetrated revenge must somehow be broken with satisfactory gratification and experiences of love without hate, and adequate ways provided to channel aggressive feelings into constructive and satisfying goals.

It is the purpose of this study to point out how the Christian faith, conceived kerygmatically, is the power which can break into the vicious circle of self-perpetuated revenge and redeem it. Such faith conceives of the universe as positive and friendly-- instead of hostile or even neutral. Repressed feelings toward mother, because she is representative of nature and also God, must be acknowledged within an environment safe enough for honest introspection. Kerygmatic faith affirms that the God of the universe is a saving God, a redeeming God, a seeking toward each heart with the love and purpose for which the heart yearns. It claims that coming into the vicious circle of self-perpetuating hate was the very God Himself, suffering its hate without being resentful in return, and who therefore conquered the vicious circle. In this victory lies more than triumph for Himself, for herein is revealed the pure will of God toward man; not hate, but love, is the final and complete will of God to man.

Within the kerygmatic faith is the open facing of hostility, possible because it is anticipated and accepted by God and His indwelt community even before the person has acknowledged it. The mask is ripped off, because for the first time it is safe to do so, for no rejection will come for the honest facing of repressed hatred. The dread of being found out is lifted, both because we know we have been found out even before we have acknowledged it ourselves, and because in a society of redeemed people status does not depend upon appearance but upon an honest facing of self. Devoid of false fronts, friendship need no longer be shunned or carefully guarded, but may become open; thus causing a reciprocal perpetuation of acceptance and love instead of hate.

Participation in such faith channels the inevitable aggressive feelings into useful sublimated service of such nature that rewarding gratifications result. Aggression that is misplaced toward persons finds its proper object in evil itself and all that threatens fulfillment. Gratifications in modern civilization that have been made distant and abstract are made immediate and concrete within a redeeming community and sacramental fellowship. Reasonable satisfactions are given to honest self-evaluation and

loving service so as to encourage expression of the love or constructive instincts. To participate in kerygmatic faith therefore is to both break the vicious circle of self-perpetuating interaction of resentments and foster the constructive love impulses for healthy life-affirming growth.

Directions for a Program of Christian Education

A general statment.--The definitive characteristic of Christian faith has been discovered from our investigation to be an experiential attestation to the Lordship of Christ. To the degree that we have been right in concluding that this has always been the heart and center of Christianity, and must of necessity continue to be, then we have the one determinant controlling the program of Christian education.

Programs of Christian education will vary considerably in detail and basic aims, but to the degree we have been correct in our conclusion, each must lead to a faith which is kerygmatic in nature or be failures from the Christian point of view. On the other hand, from the Christian point of view, whenever one shares a faith kerygmatic in nature, the program which has led to that faith is sound, regardless of the steps in the program or the added secular insights used to enhance

such a faith.

The present section is our attempt to point out the guide lines for a Christian educational program which may lead to that dynamic faith which is the goal of Christian education. It may be helpful to think of this in terms of the elliptical nature of Christian education. The foci of the ellipse are the two poles, equally essential, existential anxiety and kerygma. The first pole, existential anxiety, means that Christian education must always begin with, and be aware of, and confront the situational needs of persons in their wholeness and depth. The second pole, kerygma, means that Christian education must always also begin with the eternal message grounded in history of the nature and purpose of God in Christ. The area of the ellipse is a dynamic field of interaction between the two poles so that every force, event, and moment influences the entire field. Although the field is life in its totality, within circumscribed limits we may call this field the Christian community. The purposeful and designedly methodical attempt to guide the Christian community in relating individuals within this field can be called Christian education.

Christian education as response to existential

anxiety.--Religious education has taken as one of its axioms the principle that education must begin with the learner; that is, pupil-centered. Only that education has significance that deals with the experiences of the pupils, for the interpretation of experiences is the way people learn. With this statement this study would agree, with two qualifications.

The first qualification is that although this is a starting point, it is only one of the two beginning points. This study suggests that the guides for Christian education must come from a double orientation, the poles of an elliptical whole, the second of which is kerygma, traditionally called content-centered. The present section emphasizes the first pole, the necessity of the educational process beginning with persons in their needs.

The second qualification is that we must define what we mean by beginning with the learner and his needs. This study suggests that the starting point must be the existential anxiety of the person involved. Only to the degree that the needs of the person are considered to be those inner basic central needs pertaining to the anxieties of existence, the tensions of being-itself, does Christian education begin with the learner. To begin with the needs of the pupil means to

face the anxiousness concerning the meaning of life in all its ramifications and to bring these needs to awareness. As this is done, Christian education seeks to enable persons to confront such anxiety objectively and courageously in the light of the Christian message.

To begin with persons in their situational position is not to start with secondary peripheral concerns but with the heart and center of their basic needs. Negatively, this determines that Christian education does not have the goal of adjustment to life or the lessening of tension states, except as this might result from new relatedness to specific persons or the cosmos as a whole. It means that knowledge is not the goal of Christian education, although knowledge is indispensable for maturing, objective, and hopeful confrontation of anxiety. Ethical goodness is not the goal, except as a necessary element in a life fulfilling its potential. Church membership is not the goal, except as the means of surrounding one with an environment congenial to Christian growth and open to service. Correct doctrinal belief is not the goal, except as an expression of the relationship which affirms the meaningfulness of one's existence.

Positively, to begin with existential anxiety means to begin with the dependent-hostile relatedness

to all of life and resultant repressions and evasions of true selfhood. It means confronting the shattering breaches of togetherness encountered by persons struggling for mature relatedness. It means dealing with the self-perpetuating interaction of resentments and the love-hate relatedness to life which victimizes every person. It means dealing with the concrete specific problems of people, not with the hope of providing temporary or expedient adjustments, but to help them to accept the inevitabilities of life with courage to go on according to their insights and abilities in the light of the kerygma.

Christian education as proclamation of kerygma.--

The one pole of our educational approach has been described as centered in the existential anxieties of persons. Now we turn to the other pole of the elliptical whole, the kerygma. To be educational, the program must be a continual response to the ever changing needs of persons in their wholeness. However, to be Christian, the program must also be the response to the historically set message of the kerygma. Christian education confronts the anxieties of existence with a declaration of the event described Jesus the Christ. To the ever changing needs, questions, and anxieties

of persons, Christian education witnesses that the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth are the evidences of God's actions to empower persons with life-fulfilling answers.

This study has no objection to the statement that Christian education must be content-centered, but it does make two qualifications. The first qualification is that the bi-polar nature of Christian education be recognized. This is not to contradict the need for kerygma or content. It does mean that apart from human need, kerygma has no meaning. The second qualification is that proclamation of kerygma be understood dynamically, in terms of the present action of God on a continuum with past action. Kerygma-centered education relates the once-for-all event to the continuing life of the Spirit through community.

Whatever else a Christian educational program might be, it is Christian to the degree that the kerygma is proclaimed. Negatively, this means that biblical knowledge is not the goal of Christian education, except to the degree that biblical knowledge conveys the eternal message, kerygma, to persons in estrangement. Assent to certain statements about God, Jesus, or the church is not the goal, except to the degree that God is confessed as the acting one who meets existential

need, as Jesus is affirmed to be the present living Lord of one's life, and the church is the embodiment of and witness to that historical event, Christ.

Positively, Christian education which is centered in one pole as the kerygma, declares that in spite of the hostility that one inevitably feels towards one's surroundings and oneself, there is evidence for affirming the friendliness of life grounded in a friendly God. Kerygma-centered education affirms that estrangements of life are counter to things as they ought to be, and that the will of God is forever initiating and empowering creation for togetherness. Kerygma-centered education declares that God has entered into the vicious circle of self-perpetuating hate, suffering its hate without resentment in return, and thus witnessing to the will of God as love toward us and acting to instill power to overcome hate within us. It means that hostility may be openly faced and acknowledged, not only because it is the only objectively valid way of dealing effectively with hostility, but because God has already anticipated and accepted man as he is so that the unreal pretenses or evasions are no longer necessary. It declares that instead of reciprocating hate and resentment, man is now swept up into a blessed circle of reciprocating acceptance and love. To declare kerygma

is to declare that the realities of life are not all that they seem to be, and that there are life forces operating within society and within oneself which are not only transcending human finitude but which witness to the purposefulness and goodness of God and all creation.

The terminology and statement of the kerygma will be determined within each group according to its own peculiar emphasis, but the essential concern is that the kerygmatic element of God's action in Christ for man's need be known and proclaimed in the educational process in such manner that persons can affirm this faith out of experiential relatedness.

Christian education as function of the kerygmatic community.--The picture of Christian education as elliptically bi-polar in nature can be extended to include the thought that the area circumscribed is the kerygmatic community, and Christian education is the force of influence between these two poles. Both poles exert influence upon every person, the difference between people being the relative relation to the poles. If one is so involved in his situational needs that he cannot objectify his hopes with either secular or spiritual insight we would say that the demonic is

supreme in that life, that kerygma does not answer existential anxiety. On the other hand, if situational needs are not confronted openly it is probably an indication of sterility of thought, evasiveness of human freedom, or a restriction of the circumference in order to gain security within a partial world at the denial of potentiality. Midway is a position under tension in the field of the two poles which is the aim of Christian education.

There is no kerygma without a kerygmatic community. There is no Christ without a witnessing community to the Christ. Historically, it is the presence of the Christian community which furnishes the only adequate proof of the kerygmatic message. The church's existence is the greatest declaration that the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the Christ, the manifestation of the power of God to empower life over all evil and death. The kerygmatic community is really the only justification for the declaration of kerygma, and therefore it is essential in the program of Christian education.

From a Christian standpoint, the kerygmatic community is essential for facing one's existential situation. This does not deny that there are many communities which help persons to constructively

confront their existential situation even though such communities deny or remain silent about the Christ element. Our contention is that wherever there is life affirming power to overcome human ignorance, rebelliousness, hate, estrangement, and all such life destroying factors, there is the power in part which is completely manifested in the Christ. However, these are not Christian educational programs even though they may have positive worth. To be Christian programs the constructive factor must always be acknowledged as being empowered by God as fully manifested in the Christ of the kerygma.

The kerygmatic community is simply the grouping of those who declare that the anxiety of their existence has found hope in the kerygma, and therefore feel empowered to live in spite of estrangements with one another in hope and love. This is a two-sided observation. The first side is that the kerygmatic community witnesses that it is the kerygma, the action of God, which has called it into existence. Its message is always that God is doing something for us. It is always a witness to the action of God and the declaration that God is the source of all power and hope. Secondly, this observation points out that a new creative relationship is evidenced within a grouping of people.

Friendliness and acceptance, forgiveness and love, joy and service are seen as human elements concretely lived out within individual lives within a fellowship. It is this which the observers see and experience, and it is this which makes the initial impact upon the learner in the educational program.

This paradoxical two-sidedness, that everything is due to the initiating and empowering of God who stands transcending the human situation, and yet specifically it is the human condition of actuality of a meaningful relationship which one sees and experiences, which gives the kerygma its essential place within Christian education. Just as the message that God loves is verified in the historical concreteness of Jesus who is witnessed to be Christ by his loving action and the indwelt community which bears his name, so also is the message that God loves verified by the concretization of love within an experiential community. Therefore, we say that Christian education is not one segment or part of the program of the church. Christian education is the total impact of the life of the church. Christian education is not simply the Sunday school program, an adult discussion class, or some specified hour which is described as educational. Christian

education is not one more activity of the church alongside other activities, such as worship, service, or recreation, but it is integral to the life of the church in its totality. Christian education is what the communicants do both within and without the church. The basic teaching element then is not the specific words of teachers and preachers, but the attitudes which influence daily action, and it is this which makes the real impact in Christian education.

We have said that the kerygma, to be kerygma, must be declared with passion. By passion we mean involvement in the message declared. This declaration of the kerygma with passion is only in part verbal, that is, preaching and oral teaching. It is also, and primarily, non-verbal. To say to someone that God is forgiving is not only meaningless, but it is felt to be contradictory to experience by hearers, unless it is lived out in a forgiving manner by individuals and community. God is invariably thought to be hostile to one's self unless God is witnessed to in a friendly community, friendly in actions as well as in its declarations about the nature of God. God is felt to be condemning, unless there is an accepting community validating the declaration that God is accepting. God becomes only a rationalization of self-idealization

unless a community declares as an integral part of its life its critical faculty as the expression of God. What we are saying is simply that individuals, struggling with life in the despairs and anxieties of existence, do not differentiate between God and the community which bears his name. One is known by the other, for good or evil.

Christian education subject to the biblical norm.--The normative nature of the Bible for Christian education must now be stated. The normative nature of the Bible is derived from its relation to the kerygma and the kerygmatic community.

Previously we have stated that there could be no kerygma without a kerygmatic community, even though the kerygma itself is the source of the existence of the kerygmatic community. The kerygmatic observations and experiences of individuals arising out of their existential needs are always experienced within a kerygmatic community, a human grouping. The empirical basis of kerygmatic faith results from participation in the life of the church. On this experiential basis, that the church exists and witnesses to the kerygma, we affirm the event of the kerygma and its significance for us. The only proof we have of the kerygmatic event,

especially the resurrection, is not the assurance of documentary evidence, but experiential evidence, the actual community in which we participate. But the kerygma always is normative and has precedence, for the kerygmatic community exists because the kerygma occurred. Since the kerygma takes precedence, it is true that not only do the kerygma and kerygmatic community stand related to one another reciprocally but also in tension to each other. The kerygma furnishes the basis for the existence of the kerygmatic community and is the ultimate norm of Christian faith and life.

Since the kerygma is the source and norm of Christian faith, the kerygmatic community must never cease to witness to that event. In the primitive church the life and death and resurrection of Jesus who is Christ occurred in such a way that it cannot be repeated. Therefore, the experience and witness of that early church is normative for those in any age who look toward the kerygma for an answer to their present situation. The experience of this early church is made available to us in the Bible, the record of the kerygma as experienced by those within the first kerygmatic community brought into existence by the kerygma. Therefore, the Bible, which is the recorded witness to the kerygma by the kerygmatic community in closest proximity

to the kerygmatic event, is normative, not in its own right, but because of its unique relationship to the early community which had received the kerygma. The kerygma has always been the only source and norm of Christian faith, but the kerygma was known only in the living community which witnessed to the kerygma in the Bible. Therefore, the Bible always must stand as the norm of Christian educational programs, even though the kerygmatic community furnishes the experiential basis for faith and the kerygma is ultimately normative.

The Bible is the recorded witness of individuals and groups who found in the kerygma an answer to their anxieties of life. This witness of the kerygmatic community under the impact of the kerygma was given to fulfill the need within others for a life affirming answer to their existential anxiety. Simply because the Bible is the witness of the early community of faith concerning the relevancy of the kerygma to existential anxiety, it is now the norm for those struggling with their own depth needs who look to the distinctive answer of the kerygma. Itself the product of the kerygmatic community, the Bible now becomes its norm because of its closeness to the kerygma, the ultimate source and norm of Christian faith and life.

Our Bible is essential in Christian education, not in itself, but because of its unique and proximate relation to the kerygma, the action of the living God for man's salvation.

Christian education and the relational nature of Christian faith.--Christian faith, defined kerygmatically, affirms that Christ has eternal meaning for one's life. This relationship of kerygma to existential anxiety, of Christ to persons, of the redeeming community to individuals in need, is the goal of Christian education.

This means that whatever distinctive doctrine a Christian group might have, for the individuals within this group these doctrines have meaning in so far as they express the experientially validated relationships of these individuals. A doctrine has no saving power unless it is within and part of a person's experience. The biblical words "believe," "know," and "trust" all refer to the quality of being empirically established in one's own experience.

No declaration of faith has meaning unless it is an expression of participation in some specific concrete situational relationship. This means that no affirmation about God or Christ has meaning unless it

is an inference resulting from human relationship. All kerygmatic declarations about transcendental relationships are more than intellectual assertions. They are affirmations empirically established by participation in the truth affirmed. This means that the quality of the affirmation depends upon human relationships and inferences drawn from them.

All changes in personality, character and attitude toward life result from relationships. If there is to be renewal and transformation of one's being, it must result from new relatedness to life, first of all in human terms and then, in the light of the kerygma, in transcendental terms. If there is deformation or drawing back of one's being, it results from bad relatedness to life, which also then is inferred about transcendental relationships.

The relational nature of life is inevitable. The only question is whether the relationships are to be demonic or creative. The goal of Christian education is to surround individuals with a creative community under the influence of the kerygma so that the relational nature of life will lead toward positive relatedness.

The verbalization of one's faith is itself not a goal of Christian education. However, it is a goal to the degree that the anxieties of life need

to be brought to awareness in order to be confronted and the answers of faith must be subjected to analysis by others concerning their objectivity. Verbalization is also a part of Christian education in the sense of the responsibility of witnessing to others concerning having found in the kerygma an answer to need. It is only by sharing the experience of the kerygma that it can bring faith and new courage for each other.

The church, that which we have called the kerygmatic community, is a community of positive, constructive and redeeming relatedness. Even though it is the church which consciously and unconsciously carries on the program of Christian education, it is also the task of Christian education to continually bring about the true church. Only in such a community of relationship is one free to acknowledge one's inadequacy and need, for therein is an environment in which one will not be rejected for failure. The existence of the community continually affirms the power of Christ for themselves and serves as an avenue of witnessing to others as one feels such commissioning.

Baptism is a reality act of initiation which is most important for Christian education. However else baptism may be defined, it ought to be a symbolical means of communicating the kerygmatic experience of

being caught up by the power of God in a saving community. Baptism, kerygmatically understood, ought to convey the kerygmatic element of being accepted and loved in spite of oneself. Rightly understood, declarations about baptism are made adequately and meaningfully only after the experience of having been initiated into the fellowship. Bringing people to an understanding of the meaning of baptism is part of the educational process, but it can only be understood in any real sense after the experience of having it happen to oneself.

The Lord's supper is also a reality act essential to Christian education. In this act there is symbolical verification of that which has been empirically established in human and transcending relationship. All questions about the memorial or transubstantial nature of the Lord's supper have arisen out of the attempt to try to enhance the experiential nature of the act, but are in themselves incidental to kerygmatic faith. The only question about the Lord's supper that is significant for kerygmatic faith is in regard to the establishment of an experientially validated relationship of God actively, acceptingly, and creatingly relating to the recipient. The power of the Lord's supper is in terms

of the confidence it instills and the courage it enables one to affirm in the face of anxious life situations. This depends upon the empirical fact of our restored unity with the grace of God which it is the symobolical task of the supper to establish.

Christian ethics are the outgrowth of new relationships established in the educational process. To the degree that ethical demands must be made upon individuals it is an indication of estrangements in relationship. The fact that ethical demands must be made is a recognition of human frailty and sin and the demonic element in life. Self-discipline is a goal of Christian education as a result of the creative relationships on the human and transcendental level. Religious education is supportive of the courage needed to move out in ethical behavior. The function of Christian education is to establish a situation conducive to courageous living more than it is to make known the ethical demands of right living.

Finally, we may say that there are no methods in Christian education that are sacred. Whatever methods lend themselves to bringing about better relationships and expressing the eternal message of kerygma in concrete situations are to be utilized by the programs of Christian education.

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